THE MYSTERY

OF

LOUISE POLLARD

BY

BROOKE MADISON

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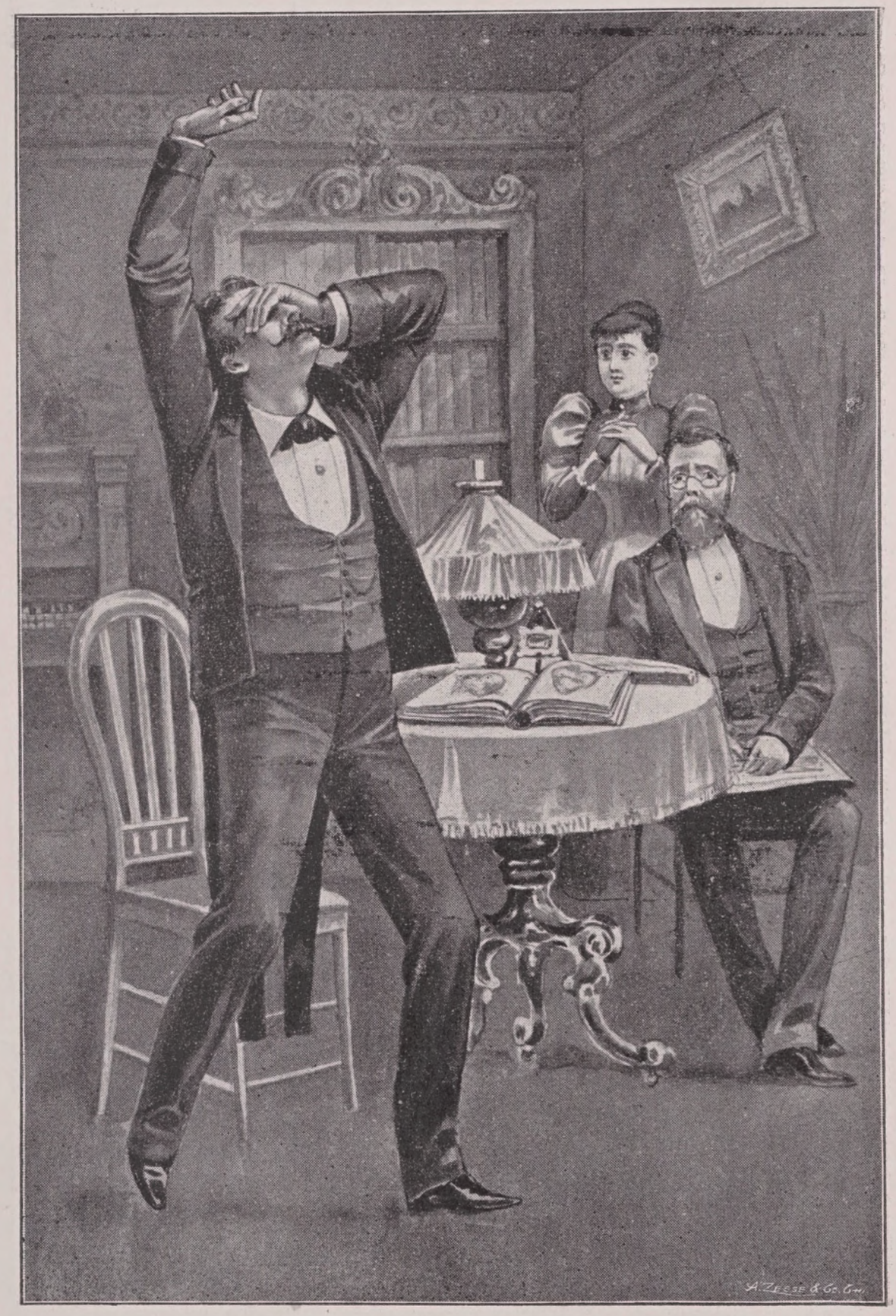


"My God, it is true!" gasped Severgn.

THE MYSTERY OF LOUISE POLLARD.

CHAPTER I.

In which appears Rose Cimarron's interest in the Mystery.

"YOU have promised to relate the entire story have you not?" asked Rose.

"Yes, Rose, upon your repeated solicitation, I have," responded I.

"The Mystery of Louise Pollard is perhaps worthy of revelation, not more because of the profound enigma which at first seemed to enshroud her young life, and the appalling calamity which was hers, than the clearness with which her life shows, that the fate of each individual may unconsciously, yet vividly, blend upon the many colored, many shaded canvass of a passing era."

We were seated upon an old rustic bench in Washington square beneath the shadows of the old college. It was in the twilight of evening. Not far from us leaped a fountain, more noticeable by the ceaseless clatter of its water than by the sight of its spray, which, however, glimmered by times and then was lost in the night.

"Ah, yes," confided Rose to me—struggling again to release from my mind the fancies which she had begun to enjoy—"and her story teaches more. It shows the sequence, that in the life of one is certain to spread indefinitely through time and space; touching as with the wand of sorcery the lives of many."

I admired Rose for her intellect. I feared her because of her vastly superior wealth, than my own.

Wealth has a mysterious power over the imaginations of the less fortunate. All imaginable possibilities are within its grasp. Every conceivable accomplishment that refines the being lies within the magic touch of its finger tips.

Did I love Rose? She was beautiful—I admired her intellect—and yet did I appreciate her as intellectual and physical beauty can be appreciated?

No, I did not.

I looked into her face. I calmly traced each lineament.

Again she began on the same theme, the Mystery of Louise Pollard. "I love the scholarly Maurice Severgn of whom you so interestingly spake last week." "I have not told you all of him," answered I. "I knew you had not," responded she, "the deepest interest attaches to him. His beautiful scholarly mind has led my day dreams—vainly have I looked into fiction and history for his likeness."

Maurice Severgn was a student—no, rather an intellectual voluptuary; for his age a veritable prodigy of learning.

What did Rose mean? I, also, was a student—no, rather a dreamer I will say, for unaccountably to me I had then suddenly detached myself from the rapturous pages of science and philosophy, for which, up to that hour in my life, I had possessed—no, not a thirst, but an irresistible passion. I was now dreaming, floating—where, I knew not, nor cared; I only knew that I was then happy.

In the past, nature had filled me with wonder and

speculation by her rigid, cold reality of truth. Nature was now more than that to me; she was beautiful, as well as wonderful. Marvelous transformation! and yet from whence came it?

I looked into Rose's eyes. I was certain of her beauty; yet I experienced no sentiment, no feeling. Strange to me, I had observed a slight tremor on her lips when she referred to Maurice Severgn; but to me at that time this slight emotional language was quite meaningless.

It did disturb my mind. What, to her, could be this man? No, not man—this mental image—for the Maurice Severgn of whom I had spoken—well he had lived and loved and suffered long years before—a mere historic substance, intangible. I acquired more interest in Rose at that very moment. Why, I know not, and yet why did she love Maurice Severgn? I would not have it so, yet why should I not?

"You love this Maurice Severgn?" inquired I. "Yes," answered Rose, looking dreamingly away into the shadows of the park where the silent trees were faintly outlined. "Then you should be made acquainted with Rosetta,"—inquired I.

"Rosetta!" exclaimed Rose, leaning quickly forward to read my meaning, but then suddenly recollecting herself, retreated till only the outline of her face was visible.

It was September; a dusk and twilight night of this beautiful month. About me seemed to arise visions of the past, all associated and more or less related

to the story of Louise Pollard, to which I now gave my mind in complete abandon—save for my transitory reflections involuntarily arising there on the impressive intellect of Rose Cimarron.

I had enjoyed her association since early in the Spring.

It was not her magnificent home that had enchanted me—this rather awed me into silence—caused me bitterness to reflect that I was poor. At times I imagined that Rose was conscious of my pain, but I am now certain that this was not in the remotest sense true.

As I have said, we were in Washington Square. This was the hour, the place, the very shadows and stars under which I had agreed should be begun the story of Louise Pollard.

After listening for some time to the splashing fountain and casting my eyes around to make certain that we were entirely alone, I began.

"Rose, do you recollect that these grounds were once used as a potter's field?"

"I do!" answered she slightly in astonishment, for all that I had previously related to her of the Mystery of Louise Pollard had been so far entirely free from such association.

Her astonishment and curiosity was my opportunity. I immediately launched forth into my story reckless of plan or system. The interest of my listener was complete—for that instant oblivious of all else.

I began.

CHAPTER II.

EXHUMED.

Being the beginning of the narrative of the Mystery of Louise Pollard as it was gathered by Rose Cimarron.

"SEVERAL years had elapsed since the last interment in Washington Square, and a heavy growth of weeds and tangled briers now hid the many forgotten graves which even when the park was in active use possessed but mounds and pits to mark the last home of their sad tenants.

"The Board of Public Health had condemned the ground, and a noble project was then in the hands of the architects—namely, the erection of the college.

"When the work of excavation and clearing had progressed a few days, people stood in wonderment before the vast number of human skeletons being exhumed from the old park, and throngs gathered there daily and stood with thoughtful faces; discanting wisely or with levity upon the fleshless femora and sutured skulls; the whitened vertebra, now plastered together with clay, and the grim grin of the lipless faces profusely lying about upon the fresh earth.

"The workmen were noted by times to stop while closely inspecting the earth, tossing between their crusty fingers the fragments of small bone of a hand; or digging with their fingers into the mud that snugly entombed a wrist or phalanges.

"They were hunting for possible jewels.

"How vain that search; this was the depository of the remains of paupers, criminals and the nameless. Who would go to them, even in life, for gems and gold?

"But one day a workman found a plain gold ring. This ring contained an inscription. The particulars were carefully published in the daily press as was the custom when articles of value were exhumed from the park.

"I will not at this point dwell upon the history of this small bit of jewelry, Rose, nor upon the possible associations awakened in the mind of an old man who read the notices and was thus helped to the possession of this ring.

"Years afterwards the ring fell into the hands of one who at the time of its discovery formed the sole contemplation of the old man.

"The excavation went steadily on; a foundation was laid, these huge walls arose from the gloomy spot where once were scattered the lonely graves of the promiscuous dead—the pauper, the criminal, the outcast and the forsaken; and to-day from these spacious doors pour by times the chattering students, unconscious of the gloom that in the hour of deep night settles about these grounds, or of the whispering shades that may lurk in secret places and peep from the dark foliage."

Thus I began to relate to Rose coherently, that which in the past she had drawn from me in allusion, and but desultorily. As I proceeded, more and more intense grew her interest. In the quiet walks of the parks of the great city, seated under the shade of the trees, or in the library of her own magnificent home, Rose called from me the story, which, to her, had become so fascinating.

The Mystery of Louise Pollard, with whatever it may possibly contain of philosophy, history, beauty, truth, love, sadness, joy, and the—to me—ever to be remembered manner in which the story itself finally reached the public can be learned from the following pages.

I shall not stop just now to relate the incidences of our many meetings during the beautiful autumn—all of which culminated so unexpectedly—thanks to the genius, the soul of Rose Cimarron.

Were I at this place to set down but half of what I there experienced under the enchantment of this young being—to tell you of the sweet music which at times inspired me in my tasks of life; and then of the bitter dejection and utter melancholy suffered by me through many a bitter hour when I used to count my small money slipping daily from my grasp and growing smaller—oh, bitterness of poverty, why have you and hope and despair ever been united in a single soul!—Were I to relate to you this and my awful sadness when I compared my condition with the magnificent reality of her home, and that of thousands of others; and lastly, and more wonderful to me, were I to reveal the magic ease with which Rose Cimarron could erase from my mind the bitterness that fate had there distilled, you would not wonder at the following narration, the Mystery of Louise Pollard.

CHAPTER III.

ENTERING A CITY.

IT was in the afternoon of a hot August day in the year 1830.

A young woman, apparently weary from long walking, was seen slowly passing down a street of the village of Kingsbridge. In her arms she carried an infant. She was now approaching the old wooden bridge over which the Boston Post Road led through the northern portion of the island to the city of New York.

The hot August sun was blazing in the western sky, sinking steadily toward the horizon. In his beams weltered the hot walls and roofs. Windows twinkled with a sizzling glare. People were panting and perspiring in every available shade—thousands sedulously hunting cool retreats from the merciless beams—cool drinks and fans being in supreme demand.

It was beneath this glaring sun that our weary pedestrian was slowly making her way toward the city, following the dusty trail of the old Boston Post Road.

In the year 1830 the northern limits of the Metropolis did not stretch beyond Bleecker street—the northern portion of the island being almost wholly uninhabited, except by rural homes.

Far away from the northern boundary of the city stretched the blistering sands of the several roads, which from earliest day ran angling from the city,

spreading out fan-shaped as they entered the upper part of the island, finally converging into a main artery and crossing the Harlem river at the village above named. All of what is now inclosed within Central Park and much of the territory on both its sides was in that day as wild, broken and barren as in the days of its original possessors—the Manhattans. Not the slightest vestige of what is now both beautiful and wonderful there, was then present. Overlooking the surrounding waste, in the northern portion of the island arose its highest eminence, over whose sun-scorched crown lay the Boston Post Road. This old thoroughfare—known even to the earliest Dutch—wound about in a sinuous manner between hills and through the small intervening valleys, through shrubs and rocks and barren heath as it proceeded northward from the city till it crossed White Plains, a spot made famous by Washington; thence piercing Magowan's Gap, a rocky causeway of the desolate heath, it finally found itself at the mouth of the old wooden bridge which spanned Harlem river.

Our traveler came across this old bridge and out into the sterile, rocky plain, which stretched out with barren ridges and small valleys far away to the base of an eminence to which we have alluded and which stood high above the surrounding country. From its top could be seen the rivers and the bay. Plain it was by her slow, plodding gait and the manner in which the woman held in her arms her infant, that she was weary and footsore. She was clad in a close-fitting, well made dress; but this was now heavily covered

with dust. Her steps were slow, monotonous and seemed made with exertion and pain. As she would sometimes cross the road her shoes sank deep into the hot sand while from the tracks arose small clouds of dust a few feet from the earth and then sank back again lifelessly. Why it was she had not selected some of the valley roads and thus avoided the irksome hill, we cannot say, unless, being a stranger she had kept the main track and thus came by the central road of the island. Passing slowly up the road, in dust some places ankle deep, and now diverging from the beaten track into by-paths lined and paved with sharp stones, boulders, withered grass and dusty, crooked shrubs, tiresomely and slowly she ascended the hill.

In that day there was little or no vegetation in this part of the island; all was a vast desolation. For the space of a half mile or more on either side of our traveler all was a ragged waste, where lay many a glacial boulder and rocky grassless patch, relieved only by thistly weeds, clinging here and there to slightly fertile spots, and clumps of miserable shrubs with a few stunted trees interspersed. At that hour this desolate landscape was baking in a sun so hot, each leaf was parching with a quenchless thirst, and the beggared roots thrust their fingers into the cracked earth in vain for moisture.

Finally, after many weary steps, our traveler reached the top of the eminence to which we have referred.

From where she stood the landscape spread out

before her like a panorama. Carelessly she dropped a pack she had been carrying, while for a moment she stood looking to the South. Scarcely was there a cloud to fleck the sky. The many steeples of the distant city and the broken outline of walls and roofs stood defined in the late afternoon sun. Thin gentle columns of smoke silently arose into the calm atmosphere from many points quietly proclaiming the whereabouts of factories and—so our traveler thought—the unbroken reign of peace. Shading her eyes with her hand, she was certain within the bay she saw the masts and sails of vessels. At her left lay the Harlem, at her right the Hudson, in whose waters could dimly be seen vessels of different sorts slowly plying their way from point to point. By times the distant note of a steam whistle would be heard, then all would sink back into its original calm.

For a time, fixed by the scene before her, she stood motionless, but suddenly she sank upon her knees and murmured, "God be praised. Rescue and protect us, Oh Lord!" afterwards slowly rising to her feet and continuing her gaze to the south.

After a time she kissed her child, took up a pack from the ground, and began the descent of the hill, but stopping before she had gone far, to contemplate the scene to the north and left of her—the barren flats, the parched ravines, the rocky knolls and stunted heath, over which, far away to the north, she traced the dim, sandy outlines of the many converging roads.

All was a dull, monotonous calm of sands, stunted

vegetation and scorching sun beams, a desert from which animation had fled.

In all this landscape there was but one thing besides the presence of this stranger, which broke the monotony of desolation. Far away to the northeast she observed a thin strata of dust ascending from a road which ran not far from the shores of Harlem river. It proceeded from a slowly moving vehicle, which by the indication of the rising dust was apparently headed for the city. This seemed the only animation about. Wiping the perspiration away which trickled in small streams from her temples, she was in the act of resuming her journey when suddenly was heard a distant rumbling, like the trundling of a vehicle swiftly approaching. The effect upon her was the most astonishing. Swiftly turning about she decerned the approach of a stage speeding at a rapid gait over the stony crown of an adjoining hill. She grasped her child hysterically, and clinging to her bundle fled with precipitation down the long side hill. Her flight was deflected from the main road in the direction of a heavy wood which lay some distance to the southeast, covering the edge of the Harlem for several miles with a dense forest, some parts of which yet remain, forming to-day much of the sheltering umbrage of the eastern part of Central Park.

As she sped over the earth, she enjoined her child to silence, muttering that strange word of warning—"sh-sh-sh," cried she, "sh, my child," while by times casting quick and frantic glances in the direction of the distant stage.

In the glare of her eyes at this moment there was terror.

In the flight of those feet there was desperation.

By the time the stage had reached the eminence from which the retreat began the woman with her child clasped wildly to her bosom had gained the wood, into which she darted and was instantly lost to sight. The stage came whirling by and made its onward journey toward the city.

An hour previous, the woman, while in the village of Kingsbridge, had seen this stage resting at an inn. By the merest chance her eyes had fallen upon one of the inmates—for whom, it will be revealed, she maintained the most unspeakable dread. The delusion of safety, which had calmed her during a long journey suddenly vanished. By a hasty departure and sly detour she flattered herself that she had escapd them. When she had preceived the thin cloud of dust ascending from the vehicle far to the northeast she was certain that it was produced by the stage. But the object she had seen was not the stage, but another vehicle whose passenger we may soon meet; and whose future deeds and life challenge our hasty acquaintance.

Silently the dust continued to ascend as this vehicle neared the outskirts of a strip of wood, until it at last vanished behind the foliage of the trees. It was pursuing that ancient and well worn track, known from earliest of the new Amsterdam people as the Bellevue Road, a prolongation of Bowery Lane.

As in the future we are to meet this traveler in closer and more material relations let us draw near to him.

The vehicle in which he was riding was a small spring wagon of the old and antiquated style, which though the primest pattern of that day would provoke but smiles in our own.. Once painted and adorned, it now was dinged and worn. At one place appeared the remains of an inscription, G B. J . All else had vanished.

The driver was seated beneath the housing of the top. By the abundance of gray hairs, mingled with the remaining dark, and the marks about his eyes and stubbled face, he was a man of sixty. He had removed his hat and thin coat, perhaps to catch the light evening breeze then setting in from the sea. The collar of his shirt was turned back, displaying a broad, hairy chest. In his strong left hand he manipulated the lines, while in his right he wielded a fresh, leafy willow branch, which by times he used as a gentle goad to the bay animal he was driving, and again as a besom to drive away the pesty flies, which in the hot sun viciously attacked its dripping flanks. Now in a slow trot, and again slackening to a walk, he was passing along that road between the beautiful trees which at that period cast their shade athwart the spacious track.

By times he indulged in a low conversation with himself, as is the habit when the mind is deeply agitated by an engrossing revery.

"Yes," muttered he, "this must be. I cannot longer avoid it. Besides I am getting old. Though ungrateful by nature my creditor can not forget my past promptitude. This sale shall be for his benefit.

It will reduce the note. Ah yes, my James, come along now, my good James!" Then softly stroking the horse with the willow branch he exclaimed with some feeling: "The Provost! I have stood under its shadow these ten years. Ah, well!" and after a long silence he ended—"Burdenless age, how sincerely a blessing!—and the child, my little Margaret!"

Suddenly raising his head and looking down the road, his eyes slightly lighting up, he exclaimed; "This is strange! Did I not meet her some miles on this side of Albany? It is the identical garb. Yes, she carries a child."

He referred to a pedestrian some distance ahead who had just come out of the neighboring forest

It was the woman and her child. She had crossed the entire woodland and was now timidly emerging into the first great road that crossed her path. Spying the vehicle approaching she crept behind an oak and cautiously glanced through the leaves of the adjoining copses.

What was the cause of such precaution? Whence came this strangely acting woman? If the remark of the old man in the wagon was correct, she had been traveling many miles on foot. The day neared the end. It was fast darkening within the forest. The sun, what little of him yet remained above the horizon, was now completely hid by the woods in which the deep shades proclaimed the approaching night. The woman's face betrayed excitement and deep anxiety. She looked by times into the deep, sheltering shades of the forest and seemed debating renewed flight.

"I have not been seen," then argued she to herself. "Perhaps he is but a peddler or a careless, unthinking traveler. I will remain. He will soon pass." The approaching clatter of the wagon grew nearer. "Sh—sh—my child," murmured she, caressing her infant which had been fretful for some time. The arm which held the child was trembling. About her mouth a visible paleness was creeping. She sought to steal a glance through the copses, but did not observe that her body was partially disclosed, owing to the springing aside of the foliage against which she placed her hand. The wagon suddenly halted. A voice from the stranger cried, "Madam!" Her heart sank at the sound. Her lips grew paler. She was about to take a step toward the forest but for a moment she hesitated.

There was no menace in that voice. Indeed did not its softness disarm fear? She hesitated. "Madam," exclaimed the voice again. She felt an irresistible desire to reply, for there was a warranty in the tone of this stranger.

"Well sir," tremblingly she replied. The tone of the old man's voice was so gentle and his face so earnest that irresistibly the woman felt herself drawn toward him. And she now stood but a few steps away.

"Pardon me, Madam," began the old man in the wagon," who now was looking her squarely in the face. "I thought to offer you a seat in my wagon the balance of your journey. This would partially compensate you for my negligence on Monday last."

"I don't understand you," replied the woman, becoming terrified by what seemed to be the token of previous recognition, for above all desire on earth she wished to enter the city unobserved.

"Pardon me Madam, are you not the lady I overtook some miles from Albany? I am sure there is no mistake. Mistake or not I am happy to make the offer, since you carry a heavy load."

"I am thankful sir," replied she, "but I am forced to decline; besides I have not far to go now "—vainly striving to dissimulate.

Leaning over the side of the wagon and looking her deeply in the face, he repeated the following in a low voice that could not have been heard ten steps away:

"Pardon the interest I show for you—a being whom before Monday last I had never met. Pardon me, madam, I say, but I may possess such information as would prove most valuable to you."

The woman, already blanched and pale, was now visibly changed, which the old man observing, replied:

"Ah! yes. I see that in your face which now confirms what I had heard. God be merciful! I in no way blame you for prefering the trackless woods to the company of him who is an untried stranger. Listen! I may relate something surprising. You are from Savannah." The woman shuddered. "You arrived in Boston by sea at the dusk of evening August first. Thence you immediately set out by stage to Concord, thence to Albany, where you arrived on the twelfth. Listen!"—and the old man's voice

assumed a frightfully prophetic tone, whispering. "You are going—." The last words were inaudible—"and rightly, too. I cannot ask you to place confidence in me, yet am I a friend and will render a service if required." The woman's eyes were illumined with fear as she looked this stranger in the face, who as though inspired was unraveling as with the tongue of a sorcerer, a tale dreadful to her.

Again her infant renewed its uneasy writhings in her arms. She turned half about and made one faltering step toward the wood, which now stood impenetrably dark on either side, while the deep dusk of evening cast a dimness far up and down the road. She felt herself walled in by deep shadows. Indeed, was she not listening to the sepulchral words of a shadow? "Hark!" again began the voice from the dim form from within the wagon. "There is no universal voucher for sincerity but the heart. The tongue of a stranger may lead you to snares, therefore, I cannot prevail upon you to accept shelter within my wagon. But you have little or no money. This I know, else you would not have walked this long journey, subjecting yourself to the curiosity of strangers, and your young child to the extreme heat. Hark!" and the old man became more serious. "You have great reason to wear a jealous secrecy and cast a watchful eye about you. Do not be oppressed by what I say," and leaning forward he slowly whispered, "your pursuers will be in the city by morning."

The young woman stood like one stricken dumb—her eyes gleaming with fear.

After a time the old man softly addressed her. "You had best hide yourself within this wagon and when we have arrived within the unfrequented parts of the city, if still you mistrust, you shall be at liberty to go.

"Ah! you hesitate. I will not prevail. It is just to me and wise in you to suspect all. Hark to me! I am an old man. I can guess very nearly of your troubles and I truly pity you. You are right—the most studied caution is your only hope.

"Enter the city by the river streets and avoid the lights from the windows and lamps. Push forward till you come to sudden breaks and turns in the streets. It is easy for the stranger to become lost in New York. In the southern portion of the city you will find streets running in all directions like the tangled meshes of a fisherman's net. There you will soon be lost. This is what you most desire. Do not be frightened; I know your danger and have given you the advice. Follow it! Once buried in that human sea, whereto I direct you, pursuit will be in vain.

"It is a place where the police themselves fear to enter, except by twos and fours. Do not tremble, woman. Remember the fiery furnace into which the righteous were cast. It is said, the sinless may pass through hell unscathed. Hunt you out a room in some unfrequented place, where the ascent is made by back stairs—some locality where every passer-by must carry the passport written in his face—I mean the mark of crime or long suffering. Once within the proper locality, a home of this kind will be easily

found. Do not fear; your present disguise is quite sufficient. When you have once located, do as you find the people, who to your mind, will perhaps seem strange; whose look may strike you with fear, but whose custom, well observed, will close the eyes of suspicion against you and lock the doors against your discovery. Reflect, woman; there is a voucher for my heart's sincerity in this counsel, since obedience by you will so hide you that I myself could give no clue.

"But this you cannot do without my aid. Here, madam, this is what I mean; take it, I say—there, hide it in the folds of your bosom."

She accepted the offering and as she clutched it in her hand she found it as she anticipated—a bag of money. The coins ground upon each other as she involuntarily gripped it, and secreted it as she was directed. The voice and the manner of the old man had partially disarmed her fears.

"That's right," began the old man again. "If in the future you need me, send me a note and I will hunt you out. My address you will find stamped on a silver tag fastened to the pouch. Take it, young woman; it may save you; its absence cannot ruin me. I have known deep distress and may know more, but your affliction, outweighs my combined sorrows. Now hasten your journey. Keep in your mind these names: 'Baxter, Chatham, and Worth;' they are the names of streets. If you can hunt out one of these, follow it for a time while dwelling upon your means of escape, and when you first look up the sense of fear will cause you to shudder; you will look vainly

in all directions. Alas! you will be lost! But hark! Though lost to the world you will save yourself and child. Now keep the silver tag and come to me when in need."

Suddenly the old man ceased, and striking the horse gently, and making a sharp cluck with his tongue, he started away in a trot, while behind him in the road, shut in by the wood and the night, stood the woman gazing as in a trance at the fast retreating wagon which after a moment completely vanished into the impenetrable shadows.

CHAPTER IV.

NIGHT—THE ARRIVAL.

AS late as the year 1830 in Bowery Lane, not far from Chatham, there stood a relic of architecture of true Nickerbocker antiquity. It was a building of two and one half stories, and of such peculiar shape that the least observant person passing that way would involuntarily stop while wrapped in astonishment at the grotesque outline which marked it from its more modern neighbors. Like poor "Rip," it had been by some mysterious law of preservation protruded upon an age in which it stood naked, forgotten and alone. The age in which it had flourished had long since departed, and though old and the very antithesis of the times, it surpassed its neighbors in strength and preservation, hundreds of which had grown up, decaded, and fallen before the very eye and shadow of this old Nickerbocker. The gables of this building were

carried far above the roof in a zigzag manner, pronouncing unmistakably the presence of Dutch embellishment. An architect of the old Amsterdam school once said gravely and with peculiar zest that this style of gable was adopted by the good, Dutch fathers to facilitate the ascension of "Saint Nick," the Patron Saint of New Amsterdam, who found it extremely difficult to scale the smooth tilings of the roof. The masonry of this queer structure was of Holland brick, and as if to attest the wisdom and taste of its ancient Dutch designer it still in days of decreptitude clung to its original colors, but slightly dimed by smoke and tempest. In it there was the Nickerbocker architectural colors, yellow, red, green and blue. "A beautiful fantasy of Dutch Art," exclaimed an old Knickerbocker of the seventeenth century as he stood admiringly before the structure in the prime days of New Amsterdam, while as yet those streets had not heard the clink of the English sword, and the calm, peaceful oyster-bargemen were drifting about in the waters of a little stream where now lies Broad Street, and the Dutch merchantmen drew out their semi-sleeping lives, oblivious of the awful transformation that a century to come was sure to bring.

The structure to which we allude had five windows. There was one in the top devoted to the gable, which caused the building at night to present the appearance of a one-eyed demon, and two in each story below whose irregularity would confirm your first impression that Dutch eyes possessed cataracts in various stages of development. The lintles were

uncouth and laid in their places without regard to the laws of the plummet or level. At the top of the gable swung and frolicked in the capricious winds the proverbial Dutch vane, a cock. But alas, his eyes were now rusty and dim with age, for to him had been allotted more than the ordinary glory of his species—he had looked with deference upon more than one Dutch Governor; yea, had he not saluted Stuyvesaunt himself—he had indicated the course of the winds for an entire century.

Below the second story window, and across the entire face of the house could be seen the ledgend, "1685."

The figures were ingeniously worked into the masonry, with the assistance of various colored bricks, in comport with the taste of the age to which it belonged. Most of the Knickerbocker buildings bore conclusive testimony as to the date of their erection, which like a million other human foibles kept an unchangeable existence even in the absence of purpose or beauty. In front of the door suspended above the walk was a huge sign upon which was painted "Wiseman's Inn." At night the sign was dimly illuminated by a large oil lamp from the top of a wooden post.

It was in the dusk of the evening of the same day on which we met the woman far to the north of the city; yea it was the very hour in which was being carried on that strange colloquy in the wood between the strange woman and the old man, that a stage pulled by two foaming steeds came swiftly up to the door of the inn whose odd structure we have just described.

"Who-a!" shouted the driver in an alarming bass, which brought a broad-shouldered porter to their assistance.

In a moment two men and a boy descended from the interior of the stage. The boy was an intensely black, negro lad, who to all appearances was about fifteen years of age; tall, muscular, and, as was revealed in after years, was endowed with extraordinary strength. He was now dressed in a dark, well fitting suit, upon the coat and vesture of which shone an array of polished, gold plated buttons. He was perhaps at this moment in his career serving in the capacity of body servant, for he seemed to recognize this station in an admirable manner, and without a word he took supreme charge of the baggage.

Orders were now given in a whisper to the stage driver, and the passengers then followed the porter into the rickety old inn.

Another moment and the stage pulled swiftly away.

The ramshackled house into which they were entering was not too poor to support a register for the convenience of its guests, and the three visitors immediately inscrolled their names, which appeared as follows:

Finias Green, ... Savannah, Ga.
Robert Cunningham, D. D., do. do.
Vulcan, slave of the above, do. do.

The latter name was written by the minister himself, who immediately called the inn-keeper into a private corner and began the following in a whisper:

"Sir," I wish to convey some important matter to your confidence."

"Well," replied the inn-keeper, looking intently out of his shining black eyes, his eager face turned to the giant form addressing him.

"Has there appeared here, within the last half hour a woman with an infant?"

"No sir," answered the inn-keeper, who by his accent was apparently an Israelite.

The minister seemed slightly non-plused. He drew from his pocket a gold watch and carefully noted the time. He then beckoned to his fellow traveler, Mr. Green. This latter gentleman was a tall, lithe, hungry looking gentleman, with black hair and a parchment face. Mr. Green slowly approached.

After a secret conference, lasting but a few moments, Minister Cunningham renewed his conversation in a low voice to Soloman Wiseman, the inn-keeper.

"You will easily recognize her. She is comparatively well dressed, though much travel worn. She is making the distance from Albany to this city on foot. Her child is an infant—perhaps dead. The excessive heat through so long a journey would necessarily be dangerous." Soloman Wiseman flinched as he looked upon that countenance of stone. Minister Cunningham continued: "You will recognize her. She has dark hair, an excellent bodily figure, and is not yet thirty years of age, tall, well proportioned. You will"--here Minister Cunningham became more intense, and his voice became inaudible to all but the one to whom he was addressing himself.

After the conversation had ended, and every detail of arrangement had apparently been settled, the guests retired to a side room where the dust was brushed from their clothing, their faces cooled and refreshed with water and towels, and their boots carefully blacked. Then in due course of time Minister Cunningham and his fellow traveler, Mr. Green, adjourned to the dining room where in due time a dinner appeared, steaming with unctuous flavor and adorned with wine.

During this time, Vulcan, the negro lad, amused himself with the porter who probed him with endless questions.

The dinner was a truly excellent one and quite put to shame the unpretentiousness of the room and house in which it was served. The stony countenance of the divine, as he looked upon the miniature clouds of steam, the smoking biscuits at the right of the honey, the sparkling ware which had seen but little previous use, and the wine laughing from out the bottles, melted into meekness, as he poured forth his unpremeditated thanks.

After this petition by Minister Cunningham, which served to whet the already intense appetite of Mr. Green, who was basking in gustatory dreams, unconscious of the solemn incense now pouring forth from the lips of his holiness; the man of God ended by a gentle hint in the ear of the Most High that a slight recognition of the business now on hand would receive the approbation of his son and servant.

Quietly the process of appeasing their hunger went

She was directing her steps where the night had fixed its most solemn and pathless bewilderments.

on—by times interrupted by short easy going remarks, then lapsing into a silent thoughtfulness and an occasional long breath, sometimes reviewing an incident of the journey, sometimes reflecting upon the probable whereabouts of the object of their pursuit, then again falling into pleased dreams and happy contentedness, while the wine now lit up their eyes or danced upon their cheeks.

While thus our travelers were enjoying their meal and resting their tired bodies, there was an episode being performed in front of the inn to which we must now turn.

Darkness had now come down over the city, and all things were arrayed in the customary habiliment of the night. Street lamps were twinkling on the corners and that dim light, produced by the luminated windows, was afloat in the streets. Up the dark alleys lay the customary gloom of these quarters, and from their dens and hovels had come forth a throng of nocturnal human creatures, darting here and there through the shadows.

Beneath the dim light of the oil lamp in front of the inn stood a young woman attentively deciphering the sign, tracing with much eagerness all marks that peculiarly set forth the odd building and made it distinct from its neighbors.

"Yes," said she to herself, "this is right, 1685." She was repeating the date upon the wall.

This woman carried an infant in her arms. Being small and of very tender age, it was completely hid in wraps. Briefly, she was the same whom at dusk we

left in Bellevue Road, far to the north of the city. The extreme heat throughout the long journey from early morn, had quite exhausted her. Her cheeks were pale and dark rings had begun to appear under her eyes. Notwithstanding this, she had a comely form and her face needed but a vital tinge to make her beautiful. Her chief pursuer, Minister Cunningham, was at that moment seriously contemplating these special attributes. His well filled stomach and rested limbs had lulled his frail conscience and awakened that spirit which we shall more fully reveal in the future. The rather remarkable coincidence of their present meeting at this inn will not here be discussed.

As the woman stood in the pale light of the lamp her countenance portrayed the mental and physical suffering, the deep anxiety she was in. There was pain about her temples, and the sad brow revealed the overcast mind. She had come many miles since morning. The nails of her shoes were buried in the flesh of her feet. Too exhausted to feel the pangs of hunger, she had tasted food but once during the entire day. She now stood trembling with weakness. Once after leaving the strange old man, the remembrance of whom was a sort of inexplicable dream to her, her quivering knees had given way and she had fallen prone upon the earth. It had been a long journey, besides she had twice been driven to precipitate flight. By times she felt a dizzy sensation about her eyes, blinding her brain, causing her to reel as one upon the edge of a precipice. Taking up her pack she slowly entered the inn. The inn-keeper having

immediately recognized her, beckoned the porter to assist her, adding, with a knowing side glance, "I will return," then hurridly leaving in the direction of the dining room.

The porter hesitated; his eyes following the retreating form of the inn-keeper.

Approaching the young woman who had seated herself on a chair near the table, he whispered, at the same time pointing to a certain place on the register —"Madam, if I am not mistaken, we have guests here waiting for a woman of your description. Shall I call them?"

She glanced at the page, riveting her eyes where directed, and instantly turned very pale. A shadow crossed a threshold not far away—instantly arising with her infant grasped tightly in her arms, her lips quivered but she did not speak. She heard footsteps in the adjoining room. "Stop that woman!" cried a voice. Instantly the negro started, but the remarkable manner in which he had succeeded in entangling his feet in the chairs of which he had improvised a couch always remained a mystery. The porter was not acquainted with the secret to the strange episode; he therefore conceived no wrong in preserving an absolute neutrality.

Leaving her pack and grasping her child tightly in her arms the woman fled precipitately into the street. She looked not about to observe her pursuers, nor scarcely in advance could it be said to select her way. With that surety with which terror inspires the feet, aimlessly she sped through the dark streets. It was the

fleetness of the terrorized. She sped on as the wind. Albeit a moment before her limbs were sinking with the effects of the long journey, they were now animated by a mad fear which sweeps away physical depletion and transforms the nerves to steel. In all respects a stranger to the dark streets, she sought only to plunge herself into those glooms that hung in shadows, where night and poverty had fashioned their abodes. By times flashed over her mind the remarks of the old man.

"Alas!" cried she through her anguish as she frantically retreated into the darkness, "that I could resolve myself into these shadows."

Despair finds its antidote in gloom. She threw herself upon the mercy of chance. She was directing her steps where the night had fixed its most solemn and pathless bewilderments. By times was heard the lowly weeping voice of the infant which she madly clasped to her breast. It was an awful moment! and as she swiftly passed, people stood in wonder at her ghastly face and glaring eyes. Happily the infant being young it was very light, but it was a serious incumbrance as the fugitive was in constant dread lest she would collide with some unseen obstacle and instantly crush it. She was escaping. Where—she did not know. She only knew that peril with out-thrust hand was clutching at her feet and menacing with its awful mace about her head. Strangeness of place, the dimly lighted streets, the miserable hovels, faces of wretchedness and that indescribable gallery which abides in the home of squalor, she noted not,

but rushed by impetuously. At one point she passed through a lot of vagrants and idlers. They hotly took up the pursuit, screaming in her ears, but mistaking her for a wretch escaping the police, with whom they bore sympathy, slightly vacillating they dropped behind, forming for a time an obstruction through which the on-coming pursuers found it impossible to rapidly pass. As is the wont of the sex when frightened, at intervals she was heard to scream, and tears —those of terror—started from her eyes, and low tremulous exclamations—those of desperation—were emitted from her pitiful lips.

When under the spell of such passion, all that is human vanishes; only the animal-side of human nature remains. Such had become this fugitive. Woe to him who would bring her to bay. A ruffian crossed her path and pressed her to the wall. With a scream and a thrust of her hand, a cat-like stroke, she left him bleeding and dazed. On she fled; her bonnet swung from her neck by its strings, and her dark hair gradually loosening as she fled through the shadows, floated upon the wind.

Now she was seen in the glare of the lamps and again she was totally hid from view. The flight had become a rout and as is the common result when excitement stirs up the thronging street, direction was soon an enigma to even the fleetest person. Each was suspecting the other, the fugitive. Criminals know this, and stop in a comfortable spot to enjoy the silly bluster they have created. But in the flight of this woman there was naught but terror, and terror knows

no guile. The woman fled on and on, wildly clinging to her child.

Suddenly, and scarcely knowing what she had done, she turned into an alley; momentarily stopped, cast her wild eyes back over the street, then hurridly took up her retreat.

Alas! the alley was so intensely dark that she had gone but a short distance when she tripped upon unexpected debris and fell to the earth with violence. Ever mindful of her child, she thrust forth the arm that held it. Instantly the infant began hysterically crying.

But feeling herself alone, and for the first time missing the on-coming throng, she hastily arose and renewed her flight, at the same time muffling the infant's cries and soothing it as she held its face to her lips.

As she proceeded, sometimes stopping to listen, the noise steadily decreased, till its mutterings were but faintly audible from where she stood. Slacking her speed to a hurried walk, broken alternately by sudden impulsive flights, she at last came to an angle of the alley-way down which moonlight was faintly breaking through the moving clouds over head.

Panting with exhaustion, her flesh quivering in places with those tremors of the last efforts of physical energy, she leaned against the wall and sank slowly to the earth. The last atom of strength seemed oozing from her body. She could go no farther. Soothing the complaining child with faint voice and quivering hand she buried her head in the folds of its

wraps and her long dark hair fell disheveled about her shoulders. For some moments she sat there soothing the child and regaining her strength. At intervals low, murmuring moans proceeded from her.

Had she finally escaped them? All about her now was calm, save the grating noise of an oscillating wire suspended from the wall which her body had accidently set in motion.

At some distance away, however, could have been heard a dull, monotonous hum arising in the street where people were busily passing and repassing. Clasping her infant close she hid herself in the deep shadow of the wall at whose base she was crouching.

The various structures about her presented a scene of no inviting aspect. The tall buildings to her left communicating one with another by rear balconies were dimly visible in the moon's rays. Upon a network of banisters and feeble staircasings, where the light fell upon them, were revealed a quantity of hanging rags and garments, the presence of which proclaimed the existence of those people who live in the narrow cells and high back garrets of upstair tenements; in those localities where the air of the city is fetid with its most maloderous fumes. They are the human fungi whose species are as diversified as they are multitudinous. Famine, sickness and they are lifelong enemies, yet do they ever abide under the same roof. They are the humanity which is below humanity; and yet, are of it.

The angle of the alley, before which the young mother had stopped, was darkened at its farther end

by the shadow of an overhanging arch which spanned the way and connected the buildings on either side.

After some time she raised her head. She saw nothing. Had she outwitted them? The child suddenly again grew fretful and cried. The mother silenced it by a single effort. There is an instinct in the young of the human-kind which admonishes them of the presence of danger. A word, a look, and they are all attention. The child was suddenly hushed. Unconscious motherly affection caused the woman to grasp this opportunity to nourish her child, and she gave it her breast.

Presently from under the arch which stood some rods away there was heard voices, murmuring in low tones. Then footsteps approached. "Hark!" exclaimed a voice in a just audible tone, "did you hear nothing? I am sure I heard the cry of an infant!" The depths of the darkness in that direction were invisible. Trembling with renewed apprehension at the unexpected voice the woman steathily arose and peered on all sides, but kept herself in the shadow of the wall. The footsteps grew plainer as the unseen strangers approached.

Must she fly? By the tone of the voices proceeding from under the arch she felt they certainly must be oblivious of her flight in the street. And yet—might they not be a parcel of her pursuers! Crouching in a niche of the wall she obscured herself as best she could and waited.

Presently two forms, a man and a woman, appeared. Before reaching her they chanced to cross the way and

stood for a moment whispering. The light fell athwart their persons and revealed the color and manner of their apparel. What could be more out of place, thought the fugitive, who viewed from her retreat an array of plumes and ribbons on the woman, and the gentlemanly attire of the male escort? Presently these two passed by, and shortly disappeared.

But the time for change had finally approached—there was a renewed stir in the streets! "This way, this way!" exclaimed a voice from that direction—"she was last seen entering this alley." The clatter of footsteps was suddenly intensified. The street had finally learned the truth! They had again picked up the trail. They were but a few rods away and fast gathering. She must instantly take flight; but where!—her pursuers were approaching from both ends of the main alley.

These extremes distracted her till her heart beat violently and she heard its pulsings in her bosom while the madness of renewed terror swept hurridly all other thoughts away.

She cast her eyes quickly up the way from whence the strangers had emerged. But what lay beyond?

She scanned the high walls that enclosed the rear of the lots near by. Oh! that she had the strength of a man, that she might now scale the barrier which stood between her and liberty! Once inside she might secrete herself till morning. In vain was her despairing hand raised to the high wall. Her position was becoming less and less tenable. Indeed it was now desperate. A motley crew of roughs who had joined in

the chase like dogs were peering into every shadow and nook. Alas! she saw the long rays of the dark lantern falling here and there with its circular light upon the walls; another flash and possibly it would fall upon *her*. She sprang to her feet and rushed toward the arch whose rayless arms stood outstretched in gloomy silence.

As she swiftly passed along in the overhanging shadow of the wall, a thought passed through her mind which brought her feet to an instant stop.

What was she entering? There was not the presence of a single ray of light ahead to tell. For a moment she stood beneath the arch. In front was a dungeon—inhabited perhaps! It was as one looking into an abyss! A mysterious vapor issued from the place and touched her with its clammy hands. Where was she? She shuddered.

The home of sin has its sinister vestibule. Intuitively the heart awakens on the threshold of the horrible. In the atmosphere of the haunt of crime our fears shape in us dreadful premonitions, and nature breeds her palpable token.

She feared to think of the possible destiny which lay but a few steps ahead.

There was a dampness in the fetid atmosphere of this place which even in the hot months of summer caused the intruder to shudder. It was like entering a mouldy vault or subterraneous passage-way. Cautiously she placed her hand against the wall, but drew it away instantly, for she felt the presence of rank, damp fungi, which grew from the bricks and stones.

In the alleys of New York the traveler sometimes finds himself shut off by an impassable wall. What if this one suddenly came to a stop! The thought appalled her.

Hesitating on the threshold she dwelt upon a thousand imaginings. She peered with frightful eyes into the depth and could see nothing. But again she distinctly heard the conversation of the advancing pursuers. No possible doom which lay in front of her was a match to that approaching steadily from the rear. How to measure the cause and depth of her awful wretchedness we may learn hereafter. Had the ocean spread its vast waters at her feet, she would have plunged in.

She advanced—feeling her way. The tread of her feet, though soft and gliding, gave forth a hollow sound. With eyes broadly open, she strained vainly into the blank darkness which was slowly encompassing her. The voices of her pursuers were steadily multiplying! Her speed was accelerated.

She had advanced into the recess some rods, when she observed her tread was growing more hollow. Indeed, did she not hear echos coming from in front? The thought horrified her!

Putting forth her hand and carefully but swiftly gliding—hopeing that every next step would break the darkness with some friendly ray, she steadily advanced.

Presently, without warning, the sound of her feet became more circumscribed. Thrusting her hand madly forth, she came to a wall!

All was over. Her blood congealed to ice. She

fell in a quivering heap as one stricken. All now was rayless night.

Desparingly clutching her infant to her breast, she held aloft her naked arm and cried, "My God, I am lost!" The terrible walls echoed her voice—then, silence.

Seemingly she had entered chaos. The mad whirl of a thousand dreadful images swept through her distracted brain. Some distance down the alley she heard the foremost of her pursuers cry—"bring a light, I hear a voice." Then, oh! what terrors were hers. She no longer strove to stifle the cries of the infant. She had been for the moment transformed; sense, courage, hope, will, all had fled, and she uttered a shriek of despair, in its cadence, more animal than human. It startled the boldest of the oncoming pack. Suddenly her brain was seized by a giddy whirl. She felt her life itself forsaking her.

Terror has its boundaries. She had approached to the very verge of it. Steadily the fatal shadows from in front, her pursurers, were slowly closing upon her.

Suddenly—as if by magic—there came a transformation.

A hoarse whisper, proceeding from an obscure corner was heard to say, "who's there?" and instantly a pencil of light fell athwart the gloom.

Had the light been the shining wand of an approaching angel it could not have more completely penetrated her soul. "Who's there?"—again demanded the husky whisper.

How entirely in accord with this sullen realm was

the startling cadence of that voice. It was as if the genius of that dark abode had taken shape. "Who's there, I say?" repeated the voice.

"I am wretchedness!" cried the despairing mother. "Oh, save me! Oh, pity; mercy; shelter! In the name of the God we both fear, save me!"

"This way!" responded the voice in a whisper.

In the next instant she felt herself raised from off her feet by a powerful arm.

CHAPTER V.

A RAY OF LIGHT.

ROSE Cimarron listened with an interest, of an intensity approaching abstraction.

We were now seated alone in the library-wing of her magnificent home.

"Hasten! Is this woman Louise Pollard?" exclaimed she, with a flush of excitement upon her cheek, at the same moment unconsciously allowing her guitar to slip from her lap till it rested upon the soft rug at her feet. Finally she again inquired—"was this woman afflicted with a mental disorder of any nature?"

I enjoyed Rose's anxiety.

The flush of her cheeks and her wide-open eyes would not permit me to rest. I picked up the thread where I had dropped it.

* * * * * *

Sympathy is the mysterious link which binds together both mote and star. Wretchedness finds its

friend in wretchedness. The worm will not devour its fellow. In this horrible place the young mother and infant had found a friend—who the woman knew not—nor could she scarcely divine what.

She could discern nothing—the darkness was so intense—but the shape of the being who carried her, as appeared by the hips and the rotundity of the arm, was that of a woman. She was in the grasp of a giantess whose size dwarfed her body to that of a child. Over the sullen pavement she felt herself being carried by the monster. Clinging to her child while her own body was in the grasp of this powerful being, whose mysterious presence she could not explain, she yielded to the demoniac embrace and trusted in this being—man or fiend—as yields the mind under an hallucination.

In a moment she heard the creaking of a door and felt herself thrust through a narrow entrance. Then succeeded the rattle of bolts.

She had emerged from darkness into oblivion! By her side, invisible, stood the deliverer, and she shuddered as she felt her own body touched by the elbow of the being.

When again she heard the the husky whisper—made now sepulchral by the overpowering darkness—she involuntarily drew back and stared into space before her, but could see nothing. Momentarily she was as a child under the enchantment of an ogre. A cold thrill ran down her neck to her very waist. What lips could utter such discordant notes? Of what form and nature was the head and visage?

Again in a whisper it said, "Stand here! I's come again. Be silent,"—and then was heard a heavy creaking tread over the floor, and presently the fugitive was alone.

She stood, horribly reflecting upon the dreams, fables and legends which in her youth she had read or heard, and the blanched cheek of childhood again returned to her. Her eyes nervously turned here and there upon the intense darkness, her heart throbbing in her heaving chest.

She pondered, unmindful of the nearness of her enemies. Suddenly seized with mad fear, to herself she exclaimed:—"Where am I?" She thrust out her hand toward the door, and touched the huge bolts. Then placing her head near the door, which to her surprise she found was made of iron, she listened intently, but heard nothing. Grasping her infant she drew back trembling in the dark—paused and reflected. Presently the light of hope fell across her mind, for she recalled these words: "Pursue that route, dwelling upon your means to escape. You will look up and the sense of fear will cause you to shudder. You will look vainly in all directions. Alas! you will be lost! But hark! Though lost to the world, you will save yourself and child." Was the utterance of the old man prophetic? She did not known; but it gave her courage. For a moment it chased away evil forebodings. She stood in the rayless dark, reflecting. Presently the creaking of a door announced the presence of some one approaching. Then was heard the same heavy tread, and the fugitive knew who it was.

In the next instant there was heard a sharp metallic click, and a lantern provided with a screen, shed its light over the room. Before the astonished gaze of tne fugitive stood the form of a negress.

Hideous black tufts of wiry beard grew upon the corners of her chin. The brow was low and wore a piercing frown. The pupils of the eyes were encircled with that startling whiteness common to the optics of negroes. The jaws were enormous—the skull was small. The lips were peculiarly thick, and livid on their inner surface. A thick, short wool, intensely black, covered the scalp. The visage was uncommonly black. The massive hands were clothed with tallons for nails.

This horrible vision transfixed her. A giddiness came over her brain. Instantly, but involuntarily, she hid the child's face from view, and sank back, grasping at the wall to support herself.

Looking her fixedly in the eyes, the negress addressed her—"What is it, miserable woman?"

The fugitive felt her tongue cleave to the roof of her mouth, as she stared speechlessly into the hideous face.

"Who be you?" asked the negress.

Still the woman stood gazing. She moved her lips, but there was no sound. Her eyes were leaping from their sockets.

"Whar yous come from?"

The woman was overpowered—she trembled and again made an effort to speak.

"Savannah," she semi-consciously gasped.

At this there was a strange look about the black face; and it repeated—"Savany!—Pears dars mystery bout."

Suddenly there was heard some sharp, hasty knocks at the door. The negress instantly darkened the lantern, went to the door and pushed back a wicket which covered an aperture to which she placed her face and repeated the old inquiry.

"Whose thar?"

The answer came in a whisper—"A friend, let me in."

"Donahy, what youens after," inquired the negress.

"We are looking for a woman and a child——."

"They's not hea!" quickly responded the negress.

"There's a large reward for the arrest," added a man on the outside.

"How much?" inquired the negress.

"One hundred dollars," responded the voice in a whisper.

"For de woman alone?"

"For woman and child."

"Gib me de scription," demanded the negress.

"In a moment," answered the voice, and the wicket was closed. The negress turned and reached forth her arms—"Why, whar's you gwine?" exclaimed she. Again she opened the lantern. The mother with her infant in her arms was crouching in one corner. The negress approached them.

Falling upon her knees in pitiful terror and clutching her infant to her breast the woman bound herself

to the nether limbs of the negress as she would cling for life to her last possible hope. The negress halted before that terrible face—its stony eyes and quivering lips, from which issued no audible sound. Clutching at the dress and gripping the hand of the negress, presently the low, frantic appeals, inaudible to those on the outside, broke upon the ear—"Don't give me to them! Don't give me up! Don't give me up! In God's name, I call upon you! Do you know suffering? Do you know wretchedness? Do you know bondage? Harken to me but for a moment. Think of the misery of the millions of your own race. My misery is a thousand times worse. Don't give me to them! Pity—pity! Stop and listen to me! It may be I, also, have money. It may be you have secrets and feelings deep as my own. Perhaps you have a child? Think of it in chains at this very moment. Think of its bleeding back beneath the slave-man's lash. You have known a mother's tears. Oh help me to save myself and child!" Then suddenly dropping her voice even lower, she looked into the very soul of the negress and exclaimed: "Forget not, oh woman, that God, even in this dark abode is looking upon us!"

"Silence! miserable woman," exclaimed the negress.

There was a knock at the door. The negress darkened the lantern and stepped forward. Again she pushed back the iron wicket and a voice asked:

"Is this you, Sally?"

"Yes sah," replied the negress. The woman had retreated out of the range of any eyes that might

appear in case the lantern was opened. A face came to the wicket and began in a husky whisper:

"The woman we seek is a brunette. She is slight but has a good form. She wears a dark, neatly fitting dress, much soiled with dust. Her child is very young. She was last seen in this place and must be within. You might as well make the reward. We intend to get her."

The voice was that of Minister Cunningham.

Another face came to the wicket but no audible sound escaped it. The image of the negress was dimly visible to the eyes that were fastening upon her. This last face at the wicket was that of Vulcan. As his eyes scanned the huge form before him they wildly dilated, then nervously twitched in their sockets as if the brain was spell-bound by the vision; finally with a serpentine steadiness they riveted themselves upon her. For a moment the negress returned their piercing focus. Suddenly exasperated, she exclaimed in a cadence as only a negro wench can: "G'way from da! black chile—g'wine 'way, I says!" The eyes did not move. They were fastened upon her. "G'way I says!" again remonstrated the wench. She menacingly rushed at the face and violently closed down the wicket. There was a despairing groan on the outside. In mental agony unobserved in the darkness Vulcan in despair raised his hands to his head and clutched his fingers into his wooly hair—stood there in the rayless dark, his heart beating with furious knocks in his chest like a beast in its cage. Thanks to a strange Providence the negress was unconscious of this.

Presently she opened the wicket again, this time just barely wide enough to allow the sound of her voice to be heard by those on the outside, saying:

"Youens stay about; I's guine be after returnen in ten minutes." She then closed down the wicket. Again the lantern shed its beams over the room.

"Missus, come! You can't stay heah. Must 'scape instantly! Dese here 'thorities—deys got to be beyed—deys police out da!" And taking the fugitive by the hand they started forth, while the negress continued, sometimes looking with ogreish eyes into the face of the fugitive, "come long! Don't be suspecten of me. I's a very wicked critter, Missus, I knowed; and p'haps I bars a hard name. But don't be a suspecten uv me." The tender motion of the mother's arms and her constant care had soothed the child again to sleep. They passed through a dark room which was seemingly void of furniture and entered a hall which led to a door. Unlatching the door they came into a dimly lighted room, through which they passed, and after many windings came to a flight of stairs. They ascended, turned short to the left and gently opened a door—first rapping to warn some possible inmate of their approach.

It was an unexpected transformation. In fact with the recollections of that which they had just left the present scene was bewildering. They had entered the vestibule of crime. The young woman did not comprehend the fact. Rugs and rich carpets covered the floor, and the room was spacious and adorned. The negress observed the woman's gray eyes to fix in

wonderment but said nothing. Easy chairs and soft, inviting sofas were scattered about. The walls were a solid display of art.

There were fawns and satyrs and nymphs; moonlight revels, bacchanalian scenes and paintings of nudity.

Upon a marble mantle sat some small statuary, a huge Turkish pipe and two long stemmed opium pipes.

The woman suddenly stopped, and pressing her child to her breast looked upon this scene with increased awe.

The air was filled with a pleasing odor, and as the two entered, the sound of distant music was heard. Its mellow waves broke softly upon their ears as if to lull the brain or drive away care. An intoxicating and restful sound stealing upon the senses. Dazed by the glitter of the golden frames, the twinkle of the mellow lights; her mind momentarily drifting in dreams which seemed to come stealing to her upon the waves of that music; her thoughts grasped and swept away by the unspeakable transformation, the fugitive stood entranced.

The negress enjoyed the effects of her sorcery as she stood silently by, looking with great, ogreish eyes upon the pale face of the woman. The black visage of the negress, her uncommon size, the brow, the wooly skull, and the tufted chin in the midst of this brilliant display presented a grim contrast. The artistic surroundings and the exquisitely unique interior beauty which pervaded all things, transformed her into a thing more frightful now than the

visage with which nature had cursed her. The white woman was silent—bewildered. Presently, between long, flowing silken curtains which were suspended in the portal of a massive and highly ornamented door-casing, there appeared a young woman, one of the inmates. The great beauty of her face, body and hands, caused our stranger to again halt. Had one of the painted nymphs descended from the wall its physical beauty could not have been more wonderful. With a serene and innocent composure she stood in the doorway, at intervals dropping her eyes upon the stranger and infant but with no show of emotion. This woman could not have been past twenty-two in age. Her head was clothed with a luxurious growth of blonde hair, which hung loosely in gentle waves about her shoulders.

When her eyes, which were large, opened and shut, they shed a soft and liquid light. They had a deep, skyish meaning in their wonderful, warm depths. The outlines of her brow were perfect, as if fresh from the brush of a Master. The curve and color of her lips were perfect. Her ear was small and shapely. The cheeks bore no marks of artificial tints; they glowed with health. Nature had made a beauty. On her left hand sparkled a jewel. At intervals her bodily grace was outlined through a soft, white, yielding gauze-like gown which clung loosely to her, displaying the outlines of her statuesque form. While thus posing between the curtains she manipulated a wine glass in her jeweled hand, and lightly sipped by times the sweet intoxicant which it con-

tained. And all the while came drifting the sweet and animating swells of the music. For the instant the fugitive mother had forgotten the enemy who yet were prowling near.

"Come!" said the negress breaking the spell with her dissonant voice. "Come!" and the two passed slowly through the room and came to another apartment equally as handsome but somewhat smaller. There they met two people—a handsome but drunken fellow, reclining upon a rich divan, talking to a young woman quite as beautiful as the first, but who, unlike the first was chatting glibly whilst smoking a cigarette.

"What a sad but beautiful face!" casually quoth she, looking at the woman and child with a small show of interest but entirely devoid of pity.

From where our stranger stood looking through a handsome corridor she could discern chambers and apartments which still on in front were adorned with costly hangings; rugs, curtains, furniture and statuary over which the party-colored lamps shed their garish beams. But howsoever remarkable this gallery of beauty and art, here and there were the unmistakable tokens of the presiding genius of the place—the golden frame of a painting fractured—a costly rug soiled with wine—a pistol ball embedded in a window casement—a deck of cards outspread upon a mahogany deal-table.

"Come, let us hasten," pleaded the white woman. "I am unused to these terrible scenes!"

Where were they? Vice has its palace. Sin may

have a gilded mask. Iniquity has a religion. Worshipping art, it has ensnared a world. Iniquity is perhaps, of all worshippers at the shrine of beauty and art, the most devout. To conquer iniquity, virtue and goodness must out-love and out-worship it, for art is a jealous goddess.

They were passing through one of the most iniquitous of dives in the entire Metropolis; a guilded palace, which to enter required passwords and countersigns, or introductions from tried and well known patrons.

It was a house where the many games of chance were daily and nightly played by gamblers and dupes behind iron doors. There vice also had ensnared beauty's trinity. The grace of women, the delight of song and the rapture of wine were there; but they were in bondage—their sweetness was laden with an insidious drug. He who remained long had been poisoned for life.

This was the Palace of Passion, Robbery and Murder; a resort so magnificent in all its details, so varied in its seductions, so vast in its means, so multitudinous in its pleasures, and so diversified in its apartments that the most delicate and refined sensibility as well as the most vicious could not fail to be enraptured. To it were lured the most fastidious ; for though it debased the senses and overthrew the conscience, leaving them to rot in the fever of incurable vice, it awakened them with the odor of the rose.

"The Home of Black Sally,"—for this was the name of this carnal palace in the vernacular of its patrons—

might be entered at one place through a fashionable and highly ornamented restaurant; at another through festoons of flowers; at another through an enchanting gallery of paintings, etchings and engravings; at another through a fashionable wine saloon; or like the mole or the rat its patrons might enter through a subterraneous way, or as our acquaintance had done it could be entered through the iron grating leading to the alley, beneath the overhanging, fungus grown arch.

The fugitive and her grim escort moved hurridly through the garish labyrinth. Passing down varnished corridors they would emerge into gilded apartments where drinking, gaming, wine-bibing or the alurements of sensuality were the absorbing occupations of the inmates, their ears bathed in the ceaseless flow of music, which floated from some invisible point. After passing a window clustering with vines, through which the moon now fell in beams of soft enchanting fire upon the form of a nymph-like girl who lay in apparent sleep upon a huge festooned rug, they came at last to a descending stair, down which they left the bewildering maze and passed toward an outer door, while each step told them of the fastly vanishing visions they had left behind.

Finally they came to a door. They opened it and passed out. The fugitive for the first time raised her head toward the sky. Aloft in the openings between the clouds the stars were twinkling in the blue depths and a faint moon was gliding. They had entered a back lot where were scattered about

wine casks, boxes and the usual debris of such refuse depositories. For a moment they both stood silently in the dim moonlight, as is the custom of those who suspect the presence of possible danger.

CHAPTER VI.

NEW YORK RETROSPECT—BLACK SALLY TALKS—ENTERING "THE DISMALS."

THE original structure of the land upon which a city is built, together with the original environments to a great extent predetermines its general geographical aspect. Of all the features of the great city of New York, the fact that it has been built upon a rocky island on an arm of the sea is perhaps the most remarkable.

Probably no city in the world has been to greater expense in development than this Metropolis. The original structure of Manhattan Island with its hills, its rock, its marshes, its lakes and its ravines would have foretold the labor that would be necessary to build the foundation of a great city.

At a period during the subjugation of the Dutch by the English and the re-christening of that social nucleus, which under its vanquished Holland inhabitants bore the name of New Amsterdam, the conquerers found their possession a rude, unassuming village, whose architecture seemed the most grotesque of which human taste is capable. The streets were narrow or broad according to the private whims of each property owner. They were tortious or sinuous

according—as the inimitable Irving has said—to the various deviations and intersections of the ancient trails of the village cows, the only approved surveyors of New Amsterdam.

Down these crooked thoroughfares grew up under the dynasty of the Dutch, irregular rows of monotonous stone and brick buildings of which "Wiseman's Inn," will serve as an example. In them, variety and beauty were entirely forgotten; durability and inconvenience were universally achieved. In the forgotton and now ostracised parts of the city, to as late as the year 1885 might have been seen structures of the New Amsterdam period. They were gloomy and covered with decay, yet affording shelter to man. Their inhabitants were a motely crew of frightful people picked from all earthly climes—the footsore journeymen, who crawl about in the substratum of all great cities. The age of these "knickerbockers" in some cases point to that dim primeval time in America, when as yet the isolated colonies along the Atlantic coast, were divided and hedged about by great nations of Indians, whose prowess in that early day, great England herself recognized whilst before the wigwam princess she knelt submissively. "Wiseman's Inn" was nearly one hundred years old when Washington's guns were opened at White Plains. It had sheltered a youth who in after years fell in King Philips' war. In the days of the episode now being related there was extant a legend to the effect that in the spacious room, where had sat Reverend Cunningham and his friend, Stuyvesaunt himself had been toasted on more

than one occasion. But, be it as it may, we shall leave the legend to the credulity or incredulity of the antiquary and pass on ; for decrepitude and death cover with their dust all living things, till legends themselves are lost in the dim chaos which rolls its clouds over all the past. The original founders of the city of which we speak, being extremely conservative in their natures, slightly unprogressive in their arts, conventional in all things and lovers and copyists of their fatherland, in building their town yielded to the curves of the ravines, swamps, lakes and hills of the island and thus laid a net-work of streets which to-day in the old part of the city puzzles the brains of the oldest inhabitant.

The modern traveler passing along the granite pavements of the avenues and streets, as they to-day exist, can little imagine the immense hills that have been leveled, the dismal swamps that have been filled, and the ravines that have been converted into huge underground ways as sewers and waste ducts to that now mighty city. What would be his surprise, if while walking along Broad street, he were informed, that in the midst of this street in the pristine days of New Amsterdam ran a respectable stream ; up whose waters the Dutch oyster-barges of that time came into the very heart of the city?

Yet, would not that surprise be heightened, if while standing to-day within the gloomy shadow of the " Tombs " he were informed that, that monument marked the sight where once lay a lake in whose waters a respectable navy might have harbored? But

change is the universal order of all earthly things, and these pictures here thrown in, are but microscopic, and save for their particular relation to our acquaintances can well be overlooked when compared to the vast changes that in a few generations have wrought a mighty nation where once lay the bewildering forests and trackless prairies of a continent.

But in the ongoing change of great cities, there is one feature deserving a special notice, as it illustrates in a degree the proposition first announced in the present chapter, and sheds some light as well over our future pathway.

How naturally gregarious is mankind—even in peace and when the environment of home know nought but the story of content? Mutual protection seems not the law of them as of lower animals, their more humble brethren, yet do they ever throng and strive together. When the first advantages of sympathy and union are achieved by association, yet does the thickening process of society go on, till we are no more astonished, that at one period in the recorded past, man—thoroughly discontented with his nature and his fellows—strove to rend the social chain, and thus betook himself to caves and the unpeopled deserts.

As population in the great social centers increases, and space becomes more valuable, the once unoccupied lands—fit only for swine and geese—become by slow irresistible pressure the homes of human beings. The lakes gradually fill, the swamps are encroached upon and finally succumb to the unyielding and evergrowing demands for inhabitable space. In this vast and

necessary change of populous centers there is an unavoidable social attrition, the ceaseless spring of human ills.

Those in affluence hold the heights whilst those in dirth, with less light, less pure air, hover forever upon the swamps. As rents increase, homes are exchanged for dens, humanity is pushed back again toward the animal; houses which in the past served as storage rooms and out-houses are fitted into dwellings; the low lands are encroached upon till all available space is occupied. Then begins that mode of packing humanity closer day by day peculiar to the overcrowding of all large cities, where life becomes a ceaseless battle, where man again produces the cannibal in man—a home for vice, a nest for spontaneous diseases, the lurking place of a million different forms of human misery.

Thus likewise has been the history of New York. The many unhealthful spots, the miasmatic swamps, characteristic of the original structure underlying that great city indicated years in advance where these deplorable and unavoidable social affliction must necessarily spring forth.

The density of the social darkness at many of these localities—due to the density of ignorance, the commoness of crime, the prevalence of numerous forms of disease, and the sad depths of poverty, for a full quarter of a century, made some of them bear the unenviable fame of being the nests of the most atrocious crime and brazen sin upon the face of the earth—the slums of London being incomparable to them.

Police and sanitary inspectors, when duty called them to these resorts, advanced in squads. At one time near "Five Points"—so named from the peculiar convergence of three streets upon each other at a single center—it was said a herd of animals could not be driven through and keep its number intact. However, it was not from one of these localities that our acquaintance was being escorted, but to one she was destined to go.

The home of "Black Sally," though approachable by a rear entrance, like that through which chance had designed for the fugitive woman to enter, yet, faced upon one of the great business streets in an otherwise highly respectable and suspicionless quarter.

When the negress and the fugitive had progressed a few steps in the direction of a high brick wall which enclosed the rear of the lot through which they were passing, the negress halted. The child, having quietly nursed, had fallen to sleep. The lofty form of the negress towered above the white woman as they stood for some moments peering into the shadows and stealthily listening. The light of the moon, which shone upon their features with peculiar effectiveness, defined the outlines of their bodies against the dark back ground. All for a time was silent. Presently one spoke. "Mistus," began the negress, looking into the face of the woman in a manner strangely confiding, "you says, Mistus, yous from

Savanny. Look here now—" she slightly hesitated as one fearful of the result of some tale their hearts are aching to tell. Hanging her head, she slowly said. "Mistus, I's not in the habit uv confiden with any body, but see'in yous straight from dar, I's gwine to ax you a quextion."

The woman was mute.

"Does you mind tellen me few words 'bout young Massa Cunningham?"

"Cunningham!" lowly remarked the woman, astonished and somewhat perplexed while her eyes illumined, expressive of the thoughts aroused by this unexpected question.

"Yes, Massa Cunningham!" replied the negress, rubbing the tufts of black growth upon her chin, and looking cautiously from her huge eyes.

Black Sally had once been a slave. Some eight years had now elapsed since the day of her bondage.

"Spec you suspicionen now uv me, but see'n your straight from dar, I's jus aken, Mistus, to ax you a quexion as jus been breaken dis old black heart, these yars."

The tone of the remark, though in that husky whisper, which, however, seemed a normal attribute of the negress, was filled with a tremor of feeling. Indeed it was pathetic; for pathos is latent, even in the breast of the grossest nature when visions, such as those now stirring this being, are within.

"Suspect you?—go on—you have no need to fear."

"Mistus," began the negress, "does you recollect a cullard chile, belonging to Master Cunningham?" and

she sighed. "Ah! laws, laws!—spec he's right likely lad now—eight years makes right smart a difference in chillen."

"His name?" cautiously inquired the woman.

"Oh, yes. I'se came near forgeten dat. I'se miserable black critter, Mistus. White folks not suspecten uv me haven any 'fections—but deys wrong, Mistus, deys wrong. Dese old eyes shed tears in de dark when I's alone, thinking of dat poor black chile and fearen of de Lord." The poor creature trembled in her tears as she wiped her dampened cheeks. "Yes, yes, dat name—declare des pressions 'bout dis here heart driv me into forgetten again," and her voice filled with maternal longings as she reflected upon the reminiscences of her life, brokenly revealed by her crude remarks.

"His name—well now!"—her huge negro eyes widening as she contemplated the problematic beauty of that, which to her wretched breast was sacred—sainted though it might have been, deep with iniquity, and capable, perhaps of crime; for of all the unsounded depths, that of the degredation of the human heart is sometimes the most unfathomable. For a moment the contemplation of her child which she had not seen for years shed a strange light throughout her being, and its magic for the moment disarmed her visage of its ogreish expression.

"Listen, Mistus," quoth she, "with all you white soul listen. Why de sound uv dat name set de cullared folks wile with jealous feelens. Hark now—I's gwine to speak dat name as has all de music uv heaben for

dis poor critter—'Vulcan!' Mistus was dat poor chil's name. Oh! Mistus," cried the poor thing in her tears, "youens not suspecten uv my feelens when I'se pronounce dat name," and the poor black creature, as she touched this magic cord, thrilled with an emotion, which throughout the many years of her race's bondage had made more sensative the acute stings of slavery; for Black Sally had known what it was to have her child sold from her breast into bondage.

"Vulcan!" exclaimed the fugitive in a low voice, thoughtfully, while visibly touched with sympathy; though silently astonished at the tears of Black Sally, —for ugliness is a solemn fault, even when blessed with a *white skin*, and it oft hides the luminous rays of the heart.

"Vulcan? Yes," reiterated Louise, pondering at the negress and striving to decipher the possible thoughts, now so rousing that being.

"Yes, yes!" began the negress in cautious but agitated tones as she read the favorable tokens in the woman's face. "Yes, thar, I's sarten uv it Mistus!" she lowly but feelingly exclaimed, inspired by the hopes of tidings which were the value of the round earth to her. "Oh! laws! laws! Mistus," cried the wretch in a delirium, "Oh! de Lord sent you! Let dis miserable critter kiss de him uv you garment."And the exalted wench, wrapped in beams of gratitude and love, perhaps as radiant in the face of heaven as those of many a whiter being, fell upon her knees, buried her black visage in the folds of the dusty dress, weeping for joy. After a time, lifting her dark face damp-

ened with tears, she began tearfully: "You see, Mistus, theys done gone and sole em all off, and driv em to Lousiane, but dat bressed little brat—laws—laws—Mistus, his face was black es er crow," and as though to magnify the quality of the child—for colored mothers were jealous of the monetary value of their children, the block being the supreme judge in all particulars pertaining to their race, she added: "Mistus, he was wuth a clean five hundred when six months old. And dat what made me shudder, for I knowed de fate was a hangen of him round. Den, soon Mas'er come shien roun, casten eyes upon which one uv dem for to take, and I says, 'Massa, I's willen to work till I's drap, but you take dat chile, an I dies shor.' And Massa jus kinder smile and says, 'taint no use, Sally; what did you bornd him into de worl for, if you spec Massa Cunningham warn't prayen to de Lord for a sarvent?' Laws—laws, dat war de hell fire for dis black flesh! I's eat nuthen for four days. T'warn't no use, Mistus, just peared de Lord was a agravaten uv me and I's trod upon by all de wuld. I culdn't bar it, so I'stuck flight."

"Hush!" enjoined the woman, putting her finger to her lips. "Do you see that form upon the balcony, slightly hidden by the shadows?"

The form to which she was referring was that of a man. He was casually standing upon one of the rear balconies which was connected with the ground by wooden stairs, dimly lighted at the rear of the third building to the left.

"Yes," hurriedly exclaimed the negress. "Come,

Mistus, we must be off. Let me tote de chile." The sleeping infant was placed in the arms of Black Sally, and the mother confidently grasped her elbow. They instantly passed the gate, and relocking the same, started on a run in the opposite direction from whence they had discerned the man, keeping the while in the shadow.

Black Sally was heading toward "The Dismals" of New York. Although quite ignorant of the intentions of the black escort, the woman submitted her delicate hand in the animal-like grasp of the negress, and with child-like confidence now followed the winding path of the monster as she hurried through the many alleys with the expertness of an animal.

Though the moon spread a faint light, they chose the shadow. Stopping suddenly by times, the black creature would hold her breath, silently listening for the slightest noise, as is noticeable in the cunning of people when they think themselves pursued. The moonlight environments yielding nothing to the ear, except, perhaps, the rattle of horses feet upon the distant pavements, the rapid journey would again be resumed between the ragged and dilapidated buildings, lofty brick walls and other structures which lined their route through the alleys and across the streets. After many blocks had been made, and the woman dripping with perspiration, saw how fast the terrible spot had dropped behind, where likely yet stood her pursuers, could not help reflecting as she breathed an air of comparative security how mysterious and uncontrolable had been the shapings of her rescue.

They had pursued their route some distance when the increasing dilapidation of the buildings betrayed the unmistakable symptoms of the increasing squalor of the neighborhood.

However, the woman was too much engaged with thoughts of the strange experience of the night and too abandoned to the negress to observe but hastily the reeking, sad conditions of the miserable shambles about her. She had observed with much perplexity, however, several human forms sleeping soundly upon drays, or upon the bare and blanketless earth; among whom lay one wrinkled old woman—her head upon a basket, her misshapen feet shoeless, the moon-beams playing upon her half-clad, aged body which had been bent and withered by many a frost; yet the air being warm she now was snoring comfortably upon her roughly improvised couch.

Through the uncommon stillness of the night and between the silent but foreboding shambles on either side, the flight was continued; at times passing rapidly across the streets where the light unavoidably fell upon their bodies, and again darting into the gloomy alleys they hastened their course.

Suddenly they emerged into an uncommonly narrow street, paved with round irregular stones. Down this they started in a hurried walk; the negress furiously panting and perspiring: the fugitive awed into silence by the lofty form of her escort.

The narrow street, down which they were hurrying, is to-day completely obliterated by the huge buttress of the Brooklyn bridge. It was then a locality,

for blocks about, claimed from its original marshes by loathsome tanneries and noisesome foundries, intermingled with which stood the squalid dwellings of the most abject poor. On either side of the hurrying pair arose the miserable hovels; leaning upon their decaying sills, exchanging mutual grimaces from patched and riven sides, threatening from their unsober foundations, the very travelers passing over the irregular pavements.

The swaying roofs covered with a green fungi, the sheeting warped and brown; the ghastly glassless windows; the tumbled chimneys; the tottering doors; the blackened, charred remains of miserable roofs, still clung to as a shelter; the stench which now and then came up from the inhabited cellars—the sea of sleeping, human fungi now stretched upon their rack-like couches, breathing the hot atmosphere of an August night—this entire scene lighted by the pale beams of the moon, furnished a scene, the like of which can be duplicated during the hot months in most of the crowded cities of the world. For such is the lot of extreme poverty the world over. To complete this solemn picture we must recall the form of the timid woman, her hair falling in dark disheveled waves at her back, her pale face, her curious, wide-open eyes, looking out from their brown depths as child-like she followed the steps of her grim escort in the narrow street skirted with these bristling hovels. Indeed it was a most uncommon sight had there been any eyes at that midnight hour to gaze upon them.

They were silently stealing through that accursed

locality where monstrosity with her hideous litter keeps her daily lair. On they sped over the irregular and neglected curbstones upon their midnight journey—the young white woman a little in the rear, her hand locked in the mammoth arm of the negress who from the first step had observed a studied silence.

As they cautiously progressed through the silence, each engrossed in her own particular reverie, suddenly the peals of a clock in some distant tower arrested them. They halted—keeping count. The strokes announced in slow, solemn tones the twelfth hour. They had met but one being, and that, a man whose hurried gait soon took him out of sight. A few lights were yet faintly glimmering from some windows. Presently, as they were passing in front of a small neglected dwelling, they witnessed a scene, which, though common in those localities, yet deserves a mention. It possessed no particular interest to the negress but thrilled the white woman with pity and wonderment.

Upon a wooden stoop in front of a wretched house lay the outstretched form of a girl; not past sixteen in age. Her shoes were without laces; torn and but half clinging to her shapely feet, her limbs, which the shabby dress partially failed to protect, were reclining over the steps. A sad picture—one hand slightly closed and the bare arm folded upon the breast, while the other lay close by her side. The moonbeams falling upon the handsome but pale face wrapped in slumber, its white light stealing over the blonde hair turning it to gold where it hung in unusual length down at the side, the small guileless mouth, the lips,

parted with an incipient smile betraying the mental mirage which probably for the moment filled the deluded soul with transitory delights—sad, unusually sad! And yet, with all this—very remarkable indeed—there was a general content which seemed to enswath her countenance, even in the midst of the awful squalor which cast its shadow on every side; revealing the solemn fact, that she was a child enured to those environments—unconscious of her destiny, as she lay in the grasp of that dread monster, poverty.

Black Sally knew the child. She was an innocent little fruit vender. What a strange fate society metes out to purity and sin! The girl of sin and carnal guilt lying upon the palace rug, surrounded by every comfort of luxury and art—this child of innocence and beauty sleeping in the street.

They had not progressed far from this scene when the negress halted before the door of a low stone building. She carefully looked about, then gently knocked upon the window casement. Presently there was a slight noise within, and they were aware they had summoned the household. This was soon confirmed by the appearance of an old lady at an open window through which she thrust her body. That this creature was very aged was quite evident. Her head was covered with matted grey and tumbled locks, which was discernable in the moonlight, falling aslant the house and lighting up the casement where they stood. Her face was withered, her mouth sunken from absence of teeth, her chin nearly met her nose, and her eyes, around which age had plowed his many furrows peeped

and blinked from their aged recesses. With a piping voice and words distinctly colored with a German accent she answered them and inquired of the negress what was wanted. It was plain the negress and she had previously met.

The negress came close and whispered inaudibly to the aged crone, who, with a mutter, indistinct to the fugitive, and a shake of her head, which indicated all was well, left them and disappeared, closing the window after her. Presently she appeared at the door where she stood shaking, with palsied feebleness her pitiful veinous hands, while speaking some words with that peculiar trembling and dropping of the lips characteristic of extreme age. Our acquaintances immediately disappeared within the house.

CHAPTER VII.

WHENCE AND WHITHER.

"ON next Thursday evening, at seven-thirty, I will be at home," remarked Rose Cimarron, as I bade her adieu in the evening shadows. Her emotion, noticeable in the light of her eyes and the inflection of her voice, gave me momentary cause for reflection. "Very well," answered I, "I may then hear you read that selection from 'Arnold's Light of Asia,' to which you specially referred."

The intervening days hastened by and the hour arrived—a beautiful, October evening. "We will defer the 'Light of Asia' to an indefinite future if

you will permit."—"At your will, Rose," interrupted I, for I instantly realized the key-note of her momentary desires. She had just arisen from the piano, flushed with high musical emotions—inspirations from Liszt. "Rose, your renditions of those instrumentals are grand," remarked I, waving her to the piano, "but just now let us have a song." She smiled a consent; sat dow, ran her fingers swiftly up and down the key-board; struck the cord that pleased her; posed, elevating her small chin and displaying her beautiful throat from which presently came those smooth, sweet tones, quivering in all their parts with that remarkable feeling which upon all occasions of this kind were the peculiar attributes of her magic.

The loose coil of dark hair at the back of Rose's head was held together by the only conspicuous article of jewelry she then wore, a diamond brooch; save, however, a small but costly emerald ring which glistened by times upon her left hand. Why was I not then enraptured with Rose's extraordinary beauty?

We were seated in our accustomed retreat, the library-wing of the mansion. The dark evening shadows were dispelled by the subdued lights of the massive chandelier which swung from the center of the lofty ceiling.

This spacious apartment was ornamented on the left by a rich, grand tapestry which swung in great golden folds from the ceiling to the floor, in places caught up with a heavy silken cord, at the ends of which hung massive silvery tassels.

The pieces of furniture about the room were made

from a deep red wood, the surface of which the artist had brought to a most perfect polish and had carved with arabesque figures of the most eccentric but strikingly beautiful pattern. Upon the floor there was a soft, yielding carpet in which was also wrought strange designs, in harmony with the marvelous workmanship of the furniture. A massive lamp, made of polished brass and ornamented with fanciful scrolls and oriental figures, sat upon a writing cabinet far away at the opposite end of the room. The walls were adorned with a few costly paintings and engravings. There were present, also, several huge cases of books.

When Rose had finished; arising from the piano she walked to the open window where she stood looking out between the leaves of the vines. I also arose and stood by her thoughtfully. Finally she turned and lowly spoke—"Will you reveal to me one thing—who was this woman, and was Louise Pollard afflicted with any peculiar mental malady?"

I smiled, and waved Rose to an easy chair near me. I then continued.

* * * * * * * * *

Something near a week after the occurrence I have last related, in the gray of the morning, the early pedestrians who were passing the corner of Bare Market observed a spectacle.

Although a common sight to the eyes of those moving in the varied thoroughfares of the great city, this was a sight calculated to accentuate all others of its nature, and strike sympathy from the coldest heart.

It was not yet morning. The dim light of the approaching sun, still sleeping in his watery couch in the eastern ocean, had not yet spread his beams over the city.

The stars, however, had faded before the fast increasing luminosity of the sky ; and the dun of the night, yet hiding the houses in dim, drowsy veils was slowly arising. A sharp clatter of footsteps could be heard a moment before the form which they heralded was fully visible ; yet the eyes of those who had been walking about for some time would have found no trouble in distinguishing a friend at some distance.

It was at this hour that a woman was seated upon a large stone near the corner of the spacious market just mentioned. In her arms she held an infant to her breast. It had fallen asleep, and the woman also, for that matter—so it appeared by her drooping head. The bosom was slightly open, and the white breast was visible. Upon it there was a small stain of blood which had dried upon the surface, plainly revealing at one place a slight laceration.

The cheap serge in which she was dressed was fearfully bedraggled and dust covered, the skirt of which was slightly torn from the waist. One sleeve, rent to ribbons, left the arm bare to the shoulder. Over the white surface slowly swayed the tatters in the light morning breeze. The naked arm was somewhat befouled for a distance below the elbow. Indeed over the entire person could be read the remaining signs of a struggle.

The dark hair partially disheveled hung in glossy

waves and small dark strands upon the bleached skin. The brow was pale and thought overcast, and the mouth melancholy. The edge of the eyelids which were covered with handsome dark fringes, were slightly swollen and pinkish from past tears—now withdrawn into the dry and hollow eyes, which, while the unthinking pedestrians at intervals moved by, slowly arose and fell, as swells the solemn and evanescent tide, telling a mournful story. Despite the pallor of her face and the sunkenness of her cheeks there were present the tokens of past beauty in the symmetry of the hand, the slim but graceful body, and the smoothness of the well defined visage.

Many were the passers-by of this sad spectacle, heedless of the awful wreck it betokened. But who in this ever ongoing tide, this busy, exacting, nether world can lend a listening ear to the broad and various measure of earth's deep, accentuated woe?

The woman had been seated for some time when a young gentleman—perhaps more tender of heart than common—found it at least within his curiosity to drop a second look upon her as he passed; and doing so, he ventured farther—then inquired, "Madam, can I render you assistance?"

For a moment there was no response. He looked again, the eyes indicated stupor. Again he repeated the question. He was answered.

The head raising slowly from off the breast; the dark locks falling back disclosing the pale forehead, a cold and lifeless tear fell from her uplifted eyes.

What a world of meaning there is in a tear! that solemn precipitation of the inner state.

As the eyes fell slowly upon the speaker he felt the presence of the deep mystery in their wonderful depths. Again addressing her he looked thoughtfully into her face—for there was an irresistible something in that visage which held him fast—and from lips white and trembling came a disconsolate moan, the unburdening of a soul. Lifelessly shaking her head and casting upon the stranger her eyes, in whose brown depths spake an unutterable gloom; she answered, "Alas! dear sir, none can help me!"

The stranger walked thoughtfully away.

As it has been anticipated, this woman and child were the same to whom we last bade adieu.

The aged lady in whose care the negress had placed her, for a slight compensation, had consigned to her a small room in her miserable hut. For the first time unlacing the silk cords of her money bag she found it to contain just five dollars in silver. For three days she had observed the council of the remarkable stranger who had given her this handsome sum. She accepted her lot among the ragged strangers, whose novel ways and furious looks at first bred in her a sense of fear.

She was becoming slightly accustomed to them—harboring thoughts of comparative security, as ghost-like she made her errands to the street by night.

But alas! The demon who seemed forever lurking at her heels she again met—another terrible experience, the characteristics of which must for the moment be left to the imagination.

Penniless she sought refuge. She was unsuc-

cessful, and the fifth night following found her resting her weary body upon a deserted stoop, as had done the little stranger for whom she had dropped a tear a few nights previous.

For two days she had been without food or a bed. The latter she might have endured, as did thousands of others, but the pains of starvation finally set in. She saw her child nursing pettishly and weeping at a milkless breast! This drove her toward madness. She made frantic efforts to find the negress, but all in vain.

Throughout the greater part of the past night she had been hunting the stranger who had given her the purse; but alas, the delirium, which, like a firey tide was sweeping her away, body and soul, had left in her memory but slight traces of the inscription of the seal which had been attached to the money bag. The word "Jerome" was all that in her memory remained.

When the morning which we have described had fully arrived, and the streets were again filled with thronging people, and the world had awakened to the duties of a new day, this desolate mother and child were pointed out by a merchant, and he said to a police standing by: "It appears that you have a duty on yon corner."

The police was soon at the woman's side, and taking her by the arm said: "Come, hasten on; we have no use for you here! Come, begone!"

Obedient to the summons she slowly arose and looked into the officer's face. In her visage—oh, awful combination of human distress—wonder, innocence, fear, hunger, dispair!

She gave one look, then slowly turned away.

* * * * * * *

I paused.

All this time I was aware of Rose Cimarron's presence, albeit my eyes had been fixed on vacancy there before me, where the mystery of Louise Pollard seemed to unroll like a huge scroll. I closed. There was a profound silence. I turned and looked upon Rose. Her face was flushed and her eyes were slightly bedimed with mist.

CHAPTER VIII.

I RECOGNIZE THIS WOMAN.

NOW in the afternoon of the same day in the morning of which we take leave of the weary creature and her child at Bare Market there occurred the following episode:

An aged man and a young gentleman had been standing for some time before a cottage on Courtland street, near Sedgwick. The young man was not past twenty-two. The former was leaning confidently against a gate post. He had been listening for some time to a discourse from the younger who stood in the middle of the walk gesticulating at intervals, to emphasize his remarks, with a small morocco case of surgical instruments.

The old gentleman's hat had for some time been removed from his head, displaying a tumbled mat of gray locks as he stood there refreshing himself in the

cooling shadow of a passing cloud. Presently they both entered the grassy yard and sat down in the shade of the house.

In a few moments a young girl came down a walk from the rear of the house. In her hand she held a pink and also the small bud of a rose which she by times delicately raised to enjoy the odor. Upon observing the young man she halted for a moment in the bright sunlight. "Margaret, this is Doctor North," remarked the old gentleman. "Oh, Margaret and I are acquainted," answered the young man, turning and bowing to the girl. Margaret was not past fourteen. "I intended this pink for you, grandfather."—"That's thoughtful my child," answered the old gentleman, stroking the soft, golden fleece which fell about the girl's shoulders. "And that rose bud—?" began the young man. "For you," answered Margaret, as her eyes glimmered with happiness. Acknowledging this tender token he pinned the rosebud to the lappel of his coat.

The previous conversation had certainly been of a secret character, for the tone of their voices sometime sank to a whisper. However they had proceeded some time, when, unobserved by them, there appeared some distance away a woman who with slow and nervous steps finally approached the yard.

She was the same who thus far has been the spectre of this narrative.

Since the moment when in the morning she had been driven away from Bare Market, she had been wandering. Since that hour there had been but

slight change in her personal aspect; unless it was that the dark circles under her eyes had grown more defined, and the eyes themselves had grown more hollow—awful wretchedness! What malediction of fate so dark were ever cast upon the brow of mother! For the last few hours her visage had begun to assume a certain indescribable, ghastly fierceness. Hunger, fear, dispair, madness, was written there.

For a moment she stood looking over the picket fence, then mechanically moved on. Again she turned and looked squarely into the faces of the two men in the yard.

"She is insane. I met her this morning at Bare Market," remarked the young man.

"Doctor!" exclaimed the old man arising with marked emotion, "she is the same of whom I spake but a few moments ago."

The woman had not changed her last position. In her arms she mechanically held her child, unconscious however that the sun was beating into its unprotected face.

It was evident from the movement of her lips that she was addressing them. The old man drew closer, and the woman weakly spoke, while her eyes seemed to fix themselves with a meaningless glare. "I am seeking—alas, I forget. I have been directed into this vicinity. Can you tell me where I can find Mr. Jerome—they say he is a smith?"

"Ah! poor woman," exclaimed the old man, "surely there is a providence, else why this strange meeting? I am he whom you seek." The woman's eyes alighted

with hope as she leaned against the fence to support herself.

"You are he? Then there is a God! Last night I appealed to him, half in faith and half in doubt, for my misfortune has long since shattered that belief taught me when a child. Oh pity me and my wretched child!"

"Margaret," exclaimed Mr. Jerome to his grandchild who was instantly by his side—" show the woman and child into the house." Margaret immediately took the woman timidly by the hand and looking her tenderly in the eyes she led her through the gate and down the walk.

"Come in, Doctor," remarked the old man to his young friend, with a knowing glance in his eyes.

The house was a small and unassuming cot, scarcely known to the noisome world. It stood not far from where in these latter days runs the boisterous cars upon their elevated way. Here lived Gillespie B. Jerome, a smith, whose chief occupation was the building of clocks and models, all of which in his day was performed by hand. The vast machine industry which has sprung up since those times has absorbed the art he followed, and done away with hand labor. that day there was an extensive business in hand labor clock making, which was the occupation of skillful mechanics, pursuing their calling by the slow plodding methods of their times. The gearings of clocks were then mostly cut from hard wood instead of from brass, as in these times; the only machinery used in a majority of cases being a foot power lathe.

It was the practice of smith Jerome to make journeys twice or thrice a year disposing of his clocks in the many villages and towns along the Hudson. Sometimes he carried his journeys as far as Boston.

It was on a return from a journey of like character that he chanced to overtake the woman and child, whose strange conduct it is seen was not an entire enigma to him.

In this cot smith Jerome had lived for many years. He was now an aged man, passed seventy, though in his veins coursed a stream, pulsing with a vitality not common to men of his years. In his old age he had but one companion, a little grand daughter. This child was an orphan. Her mother, the only child of Mr. Jerome, had died young; and her father had lost his life at sea.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CRISIS.

THE more than ordinary life of Father Jerome—for this was the nickname reverence had paid the smith—and the manner in which his life and that of Margaret's blends with the fate of Louise Pollard, commands special attention.

Father Jerome had passed a life filled with no trivial experience. In his youth he was of the proper age to catch that patriotic fire which swept the Atlantic Colonies, and finally drove British dominion from the infuriated land of America. At eighteen he found himself a fifer boy under Washington. Two years

later, he had been given a captainship, and at the close of the eight years' struggle he found himself commanding a regiment. In the second war with Great Britain, he again fell into ranks and fought to the close. During the interval between the close of the Revolution and the reopening of hostilities which ushered in "the war of 1812," he had followed his calling as a clock-smith in the true and original meaning of that phrase. Being endowed with a careful nature he had reaped in time a handsome fortune. But this was now gone. A friend had ensnared him.

He had placed his name upon a bond. The friend had absconded and Father Jerome was called upon to settle. The financial strain had ruined him; yes it had more than ruined him. It had left him several thousand dollars in debt. Ten years had since elapsed.

Those were the days of persecution for debt. Debtors' prisons were the shame of every State throughout the land. They were an appendage of that medieval darkness heretofore not completely swept away by the preceding social revolutions—an inheritance from the diseased tissues of the mother country which to eradicate took years, and not without vast suffering to thousands whose paltry rags had been caught in the wheels of the law.

When the news first came to Father Jerome's ears, that he would be called upon to make good the loss caused by his supposed friend's fraud it was a severe shock, for he had just reached the sixtieth round of his years.

Father Jerome knew that the law had no reverence

for age, and more than this, he felt the financial responsibility which the debt inspired. He immediately sold all unnecessary property; withdrew himself into the cot which we find him occupying and began to fortify against the perils of debt and the penalty of poverty. The old rust-covered tools which his youthful hands had polished with toil and with which he had gained the greater part of his former wealth were again brought forth, and those hands which were now bent with age and that face in whose wrinkles were the indentures of sixty years bent again over the bench. What a falling off of friends there is at such a time! So had it been with Father Jerome. None knew him in humble circumstances who had courted him in affluence.

Day by day, week by week for the space of ten years now had the unbroken clink of his hammer been heard. He had pinched and starved, he had grown gray, he was standing upon the verge; yet did the debt encompass him as a premature shroud.

The golden dreams which he had shaped for his grand-daughter had vanished with the fortune.

Time had swiftly flown. Father Jerome had finally approached a precipice over which he must leap or into which he must descend. He must pay the debt or go to jail. During the past ten years of trial he had managed to retain the legal title to his old home, but the bulk of the debt was yet unpaid. In these years he had also grown gray.

Margaret had for several years assumed the entire duties of the household. Indeed she was jealous of

her task, understanding most wisely her responsibility. Responsibility makes strength. However, although her grandfather had always imparted to her the many affairs of his business, yet had he studiously avoided giving her any intelligence concerning the threatening nature of the debt, which for years had been slowly swallowing him. He would not inflict that upon her mind which to him had been a painful burden. But the time was fast approaching when he found it impossible to hide his pain. Circumstances were fast drawing to an issue when it would be impossible to avoid the revelation.

As to the stranger who had suddenly appeared within the threshold, she and her child could be of little incumbrance; and the generous heart of Father Jerome opened wide the hospitality of his home to this suffering creature, nor apparently troubled his mind as to the cause of her grief.

"Who is Louise, father?" asked Margaret one day in the work shop.

The old man looked up from his task, took his spectacles from his eyes, and with gravity replied—"Her affliction, my child, is too deep for your young mind to comprehend. Though it is wrong, my child, to deny your question, I must on this occasion, for the love you have conceived for this stranger would not permit me to reveal this secret."

Many times previous had father Jerome enjoined the strictest silence upon this topic, and Margaret had learned the affairs of the stranger were not for the world to know.

Several weeks passed by. The woman had kept the house and it was believed by her that she was now safe beyond question. But there was a crisis approaching the affairs of Father Jerome's household.

It had been noticed by Louise, and also by Margaret, that Father Jerome had of late grown remarkably taciturn. He was seen to sit for hours in the evening time quietly buried in meditation, during which times no laugh of Margaret or passing remark aroused him.

When one evening he had sat for some time Margaret said: "What makes you so sad, Grandpa?" Father Jerome did not answer. After a time Louise retired with her child for the night. Margaret again approached her grandfather, and smoothing his gray locks gently from his brow she began—"Grandfather, I feel that I am quite old enough to share some of your thoughts; some of your secrets. I know there is something painful in your mind, Grandfather, which you would tell me if you did not fear that it would affect me. But I am sure your silence is more painful to me than could be the story of your trouble, for then I could share it with you, while now I only know that your mind is troubled and can offer no help. Tell me Grandfather, what troubles you?" There was a long silence. "I know that you are suffering, but what can I do? And Louise, Grandfather, has it anything to do with her? Where is this strange woman from? Who is she? There is a cloud coming over the whole house since she came. She is so sweet and yet so sad. I can't think she can be the cause of it, and yet it is

all so strange. I wept to-day Grandfather, when I thought how badly you must feel to continue so long in silence."

"My little Margaret," began Father Jerome, softly caressing Margaret on the hand, "you are plenty old enough to share all my thoughts, and it is not because that I thought I could not trust you, Margaret; but I have held my tongue"—he sadly halted for a moment to reassure himself and hide his feelings, then finished—"Because, Margaret, your heart is tender, and you are my little daughter!" The old man's voice quivered and a tear fell from his eye. Margaret stood for a moment in contemplation, for she was sorely affected, and her face flushed, while irresistible tears gushed from her eyes to hear that quiver in the voice and to see his tears, the first from those eyes she had ever witnessed.

"Margaret, my daughter," continued Father Jerome with resolution, "did you ever go hungry several days at any time in your life, my child?" "No, Grandfather," responded the curious but affected girl. "But why do you ask? You have been with me all my life." "No, my child, you never have; but I have, my child, and that makes me tremble when I think what possibly awaits my unsuspecting Margaret. When some days since I hinted of the debt, then past due, you could not appreciate the weight of my remark, perhaps I did not make it sufficiently plain, but, my child, it is all over." Father Jerome was visibly trembling. "Margaret, my child, come close to me." Looking into her face with a sad, confiding

expression he finished—"Margaret, I am getting old. Did you ever think what it were best to do if some day you were suddenly left alone?"

How distant from youth is the thought of death! Yet how terrible is its realization when once fully conceived! Margaret had never stood face to face with this dark possibility before; and when father Jerome had fully spoken, for a moment she was completely overwhelmed, and she burst in tears.

The debt, of which we have spoken, had finally taken full possession of Father Jerome, for he was old. His penury had been known to the world so long that friendship had dwindled to a handful of acquaintances, and they, the old man knew, were powerless in the face of that dread enemy of the poor of his day, the statutes of debt and the 'Old Provost," that debtor's prison, whose merciless walls had closed a thousand times upon more reverend hairs than his.

For hours together he was noted by night to walk the floor, rejecting that balm of age, sleep, for it had fled him. One night, a few weeks after the arrival of Louise, the aged debtor was seated in the great chair wherein at evening time he frequently betook himself; and where he was prone to sit musing for hours, tossing in the hands of thought those memories of life which so frequent the dreams of age. Something had sealed his senses. From him the present had fled, the past alone occupied him. The last touch of the hand of his little grand-daughter had left the whitened shreds of age gently tossed upon his brow. His eyes were fixed upon a small cabinet in the corner. Across

the room fell his shadow. He was alone with his revery. He unconsciously drew near to the little cabinet and began manuvering with its drawers, and the many small articles which they contained, for each ribbon and thread, each petty article, had for him an awakening power and told its little story. As he passed from drawer to drawer and casually caressed each tiny piece, one by one did the days of other years awaken. Back over the vale of years he went and in his mind arose pictures long covered with the dust of memory.

Revery affords pleasure when the mind is secure and at rest; but to have the tide of memory come rushing back upon us, falling with a roar at our feet, is not pleasant, when upon the reef of calamity sits the mind; and tossed are the thoughts into the darkning billows of dejection.

At times Father Jerome would start, then fall back into his chair; close his eyes and shudder. Once a tear—that of age and manhood the bitterest, struggled slowly from out his eyes.

How many stories came wailing to him from out that little cabinet which had been associated with his long life, can never be known. Sadly entranced was he, this aged mariner upon the beach of time. For those waters of life's ocean which should be blest with floods of light when age reviews the past, and with prophetic eyes gleans into the future, were tossed with an oncoming tempest.

At intervals, forgetting the present, he sadly smiled; for across his mind had flown a recollection of

sweeter days, and before him again stood an angelic face. For she who had been dead, many years, visited his gloomy dreams, driving away sorrow as sunshine breaks by times the intervening clouds. But suddenly again would the light darken into gloom, for the tide which was arising about him alternately touched and receded with its admonishing spray.

So abstracted was he at this moment, that the deep rumbling of an approaching storm had not summoned his senses from their dreary contemplation. Suddenly from out the pitchy darkness boomed a peal of thunder and he arose and looked into the night. A flash of lightning lighted up the street.

For an hour, a hurricane, vaulting up out of the sea, had swiftly approached. A violent tempest of wind was then sweeping the southern portion of the city. Out at sea had burst the clouds, which by the flash of the lightning shone in great width along the sky. So incessant was the lightning, that the otherwise dark streets shone by times like day. The old man arose and stood at the window. He heard with astonishment the uncommon crushing of the wind as it bent the trees and whistled through the shrubbery, tossing thick clouds of yet unsprinkled dust on high. Suddenly a few rain drops fell with force against the window, then with a rush preceded by a flash of lightning, set in the watery tempest.

Father Jerome resumed his seat. In the tempest of the elements he heard the tempest of his soul, telling of his long life of vain labor, and the gloomy forbodings of the debtors' prison. He sat there brooding

for a long time. Suddenly in the midst of the tempest there was heard a rap at the door! The old man hesitated. He could not believe his senses. He consulted the clock and it stood at 11:10. He waited but half inclined to obey the summons.

Suddenly there was another rap; this time louder than before! The rain was dashing in torrents against the window and there was heard by times the thunder rolling among the great clouds.

He arose and slowly opened the door slightly, for the rain dashed against the casement and into his face. He then inquired, "What is wanted? Come in."

In the midst of a tempest people unconsciously speak high. The answer to Father Jerome was proportioned to the deep disturbance outside. "I desire to see you for a few moments," was the answer. "Come in!" responded the old man. To his surprise four men entered instead of one.

"You are giving shelter to a young woman and child whom we seek," began the largest of the four. It was Minister Cunningham.

"Gentlemen, I am at a loss to know what you mean," answered the old man. Both voices were pitched high and resounded throughout the house. Suddenly two men grasped the arms of the old man, another drew a pistol, the fourth began binding him hand and foot. In vain did he shout for help; for his voice was drowned by the tempest. In a moment he was bound and gaged, lying upon the floor, writhing and gurgling inarticulate ravings. The noise had necessarily been loud, and the clatter of footsteps,

now ascending the stairs to the upper part of the house, added to the internal hurricane. On the floor the body of the old man writhed and twisted in the cord which bound it. The muscles of the arms swelled and trembled in the struggle of a mysterious strength. The arteries of the neck filled like whipcords, while o'er the face, now congested with dark blood, tossed his white hair.

Suddenly the screams of Margaret were heard from above. The body of the old man swelled with apparently superhuman force. The thongs which bound the arms snapped in pieces, and the old man, with furious eyes arose like a demon. At one blow he felled an adversary who sought to hold him. Then taking the gag from out his mouth he started madly for the stair; crying in frenzied tones "My child! My child!"

He ascended the steps with remarkable swiftness for a man of his years. In a few moments he returned with Margaret in his arms and stood in the middle of the room madly clutching a large cane which he had picked up in his flight.

For some time the search was continued by the intruders, during which the old man soothed his child and told her they meant no harm to her but that they had come to carry away Louise and her child.

"Make for the street and overtake her! She has escaped!" rang out a voice from above; and in less than it takes to tell it the intruders vanished from the house and with a rush in several directions were heard fast retreating from the spot, soon followed by a closed carriage in a swift trot.

CHAPTER X.

SEVEN MEN.

"LABYRINTHIAN mystery of the human heart!" meditated Rose Cimarron—"well termed by the Ancients the tabernacle of the soul. Upon the walls of its wonderful corridors is to be found the picture writings of life—the Ego, the human spirit." Then raising her eyes she continued: "In this episode of Father Jerome, now referred to, there is a page of history." "Yes," replied I, a sample of those unwritten pages which are the cement to the foundation and the mortise of the frame in the social structure of the human race."—"Of which historians tell us so little," interrupted she, "for it would be impossible for them to compress within their volumes the deeds of that vast host, the plain people of common-place life. History," continued she, "is the picture writings of life, on a grand scale. Philosophy ever teaches—would you be strong forget not the past; bow reverently before its teachings; stand with uncovered head in its solemn light! Nations are prosperous and magnanimous when they stand full in the light cast by those who have gone before." Then turning suddenly—"This episode of Father Jerome to which you now refer, indicates that debts were not the sole cause of his impending calamity!"—"No, he had also been inviting trouble from another source. He had drawn down upon himself the bitterest con-

ceivable political hatred. Political prejudice is the focal point for every human passion; the point at which they intermingle, strike against each other, become heated—finally ignite and explode."

"The episode hints at something of the mystery of Louise?"—"Not in the least! On the contrary it need never have been told had it not with other like incidents finally precipitated the calamity of Father Jerome. The tornado that wrecks a vessel upon the reefs sometimes founders another far out at sea; likewise did the calamity of Father Jerome materially alter the future destiny of Louise Pollard. Had it been otherwise, her life might easily here have sunken out of sight. Deranged, mad, accursed, or a being stained with terrible crime whom the law with catlike stealth had hunted—this only need have been the conclusion of all inquirers. Upon this very threshold might we now briefly set down the full course of her trouble, had all been serene in the life of Father Jerome."

"And his fate?"—"It was intended that Father Jerome should somewhat affect the lives of people yet to be; of other generations. Had it not been for his calamity this woman and child would here have sunken into oblivion—nor would people whom we have yet to meet have loved, thought and suffered."—"By so slight a thread," meditated Rose, "does the all-engrossing experience in each individual existence depend upon the deeds of preceding generations." Then with animation she inquired: "If the stratagem to entice Father Jerome within the borders of

South Carolina had succeeeded what would have resulted?"

"Father Jerome would have been legally hanged!"

' Why, impossible—appalling! No, it can't be!"

"True!"

"Then let me know all."

* * * * * * *

Underlying Father Jerome's cottage there was a basement—capacious, well drained and kept healthful and comfortable by the fires of a small stove which he sometimes used as a forge. This basement was firmly walled in, having been cut from a solid ledge of lime-stone. At the rear was fashioned a doorway, which led to the open air. In front and rear there were grated windows provided with doors which closed from the inside. At one point a row of steps descended from an upstair closet which communicated with the interior of the cottage. This basement Father Jerome used as a workshop. Running across the full width there was fashioned a heavy work-bench, at all times promiscuously covered with various tools, files, hammers, saws, a hand vice, compasses, dividers, measures, a flat, polished, steel hammering-block, a large bench-vice, etc., etc., besides many delicate instruments unnameable.

A large quantity of metal and wood, material from which he shaped his clocks and models, was also scattered about, and upon his bench at all times could be seen parts of clocks, etc., in process of completion. To one end of this commodious bench was also fastened a foot-power lathe.

In the center of the basement sat a writing table upon which there was ink, paper and a supply of quill pens. By night this apartment was lighted by means of a collection of candles, appropriately adjusted about the room. In the day-time sufficient light came in through the grated windows over the bench and at the rear.

But the most remarkable feature in this basement consisted of a case of printer's types and a small hand-power printing press of antiquated pattern. Near this press lay a stock of blank paper, and promiscuously scattered about the floor lay printed matter, most likely the product of the little press.

Bearing in mind that although this episode which transpired several days after Louise Pollard's escape, reveals positively nothing concerning her mystery; nevertheless at the risk of some tedium we shall attempt to discover by it how Father Jerome hastened upon himself the peril of the Old Provost—and we shall finally learn how he involuntarily came into possession of matter of the most profound concern to other interesting people whom we have yet to meet.

If the conversation between Father Jerome and the young physician had been remarkable for its secretive silence, certainly the following conversation is remarkable for its open candor. But this fact may be easily accountable from the further facts that the following occurred in the basement just described and between the hours of ten and one o'clock at night. The basement was dimly lighted by a number of candles fixed on wedges which had been driven into

the fissures of the natural wall at various points. For over two hours the little printing press had been kept busy by two men, one turning it by hand and the other feeding it rapidly with sheets of paper, which, when released, displayed an array of printer's ink, and which in very remarkable language showed that somebody had been indulging in very serious reflections.

Over a thousand sheets of this printed matter were stacked upon one corner of the rectangular writing table. In the center of this table two candles were burning, which lighted up the countenance of five men who were seated about the table, busily folding and stamping the strange documents for the mails.

Father Jerome was one of those five men. The sleeves of his cheap shirt, which was made of blue cotton fabric, were rolled back to the elbows, and the bosom and collar hung loosely open, displaying a broad, hairy chest and strong neck, the veins and sinews of which were remarkably vigorous, when we consider the whitened locks of hair which hung in a rather disarranged mat from his scalp over his forehead and temples. Although Father Jerome's eyes were blue and very large—betokening a mild nature—they were set quite deep in his head and beneath heavy brows; and as the brows had a faculty of clinching together whilst the eyes fixed and gleamed upon the image which the mind momentarily held; like the eye and brow of a determined swordsman they indicated the presence of mental energy and concen-

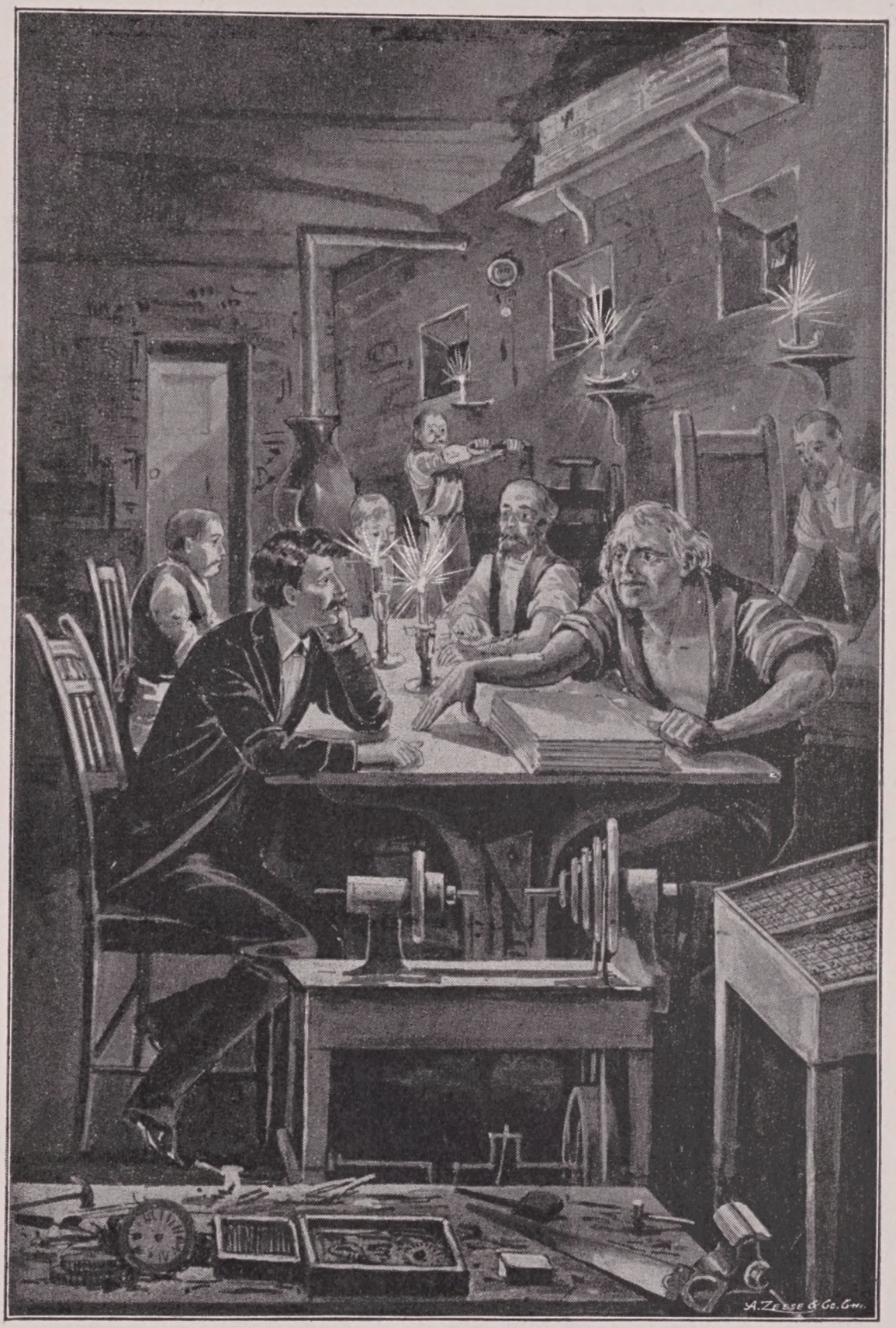
tration of volition. The muscular machinery of his body, although now quite withered, was fastened to heavy bones, which indicated that the owner had at one time been endowed with extraordinary strength. When he spoke, his words came forth in deep sonorous tones, and as his feelings were capable of reaching a high emotional climax, with flushed face and gleaming eyes, Father Jerome had upon many public occasions displayed an eloquence, both to be admired and feared. It is more than likely that much of the matter contained in these printed documents was directly or indirectly inspirations from his pen.

In folding these documents there was a studied care in every instance to completely hide the title-page, which in large bold type read, "*The Revolutionist.*"

Steadily continued the process of preparing these documents for the mails, which consisted in folding and packing into bundles of one hundred and binding tightly with twine to which were attached tags bearing various postal destinations located in various states.

Greatly to the apparent delight of their associates, Father Jerome and a young man who sat at one corner of the table had for some time indulged in enthusiastic conversation.

The young man was reclining with one elbow resting upon the table and the fingers of his uplifted hand completely buried in the dark mat of hair which clothed his head. His dark gray eyes were riveted upon Father Jerome, whilst by times he lifted his left hand and lightly trained his young mustache which thinly adorned his lip.



——————a sample of those unwritten pages which are the cement to the foundation and the mortise of the frame in the social structure of the human race.

"Haste, is not the proper policy," continued Father Jerome in argumentative style, addressing the young man.

"No! Doctor North. I am satisfied with our progress; it is slow, but its strength shall be as those huge pines in the northern provinces of Mexico, those California giants of which Spanish legend speaks, and therefore prudence demands that we be not too open and bold. I regard it as impolitic to pursue so radical a course as you outline. The government has already been called upon to stop the tide of our documents through the mails. What if this be done?—and it is not an improbable thing to expect, considering the attitude of the present government. What is the cry of the Demigod of the South? Although the denunciations of Calhoun are not pleasing to the ears of Jackson he dislikes them because they are Calhoun, and would forward any scheme which he thought would secure him with the Democrats—for Presidents are but men."

"True," replied the young man in a strong voice. "Yes, it is deplorable that moral reform must be so nurtured—like a weakling child! We are now but a handful. Having no political force we are in contempt. To enter within the borders of a slave state is death. We are called upon to obey the fugitive slave law—though obedience revolts our very conscience. Yet the duty is made inexorable. We erect a press for the propagation of our views. It is torn down and burned. We send out missionaries—they send them back in their shrouds. Five thousand dollars reward

is offered for the apprehension of Garrison by a Georgia Governor—because he speaks the truth, and seeks to convince the heart through the brain!"

"True enough," replied Father Jerome, "but mark this—look to it—our publications have now begun to awaken a spirit, which, when once fully evoked, can never be suppressed! There will come a time—I may not see it, but you will, young man—when our party will strike terror into the hearts of those who now despise it, and will astonish those and subdue them who coldly slight it." The old man's eyes sparkled from under his tufted brows, as he uttered this final remark.

They were discussing the political horizon of their times. Andrew Jackson was then ending his first term as President of the United States. Calhoun, who two years later had led his State from the Union for the first time, was thundering against protective tariff, while invoking by a species of political incantation the popular phantom of "State's Rights."

"Carnage!—a universal uprising, is entirely justifiable. Revolutions are healthy!" exclaimed the young man.

"Have a care, Doctor," muttered the old man, "President Jackson has finished a reproof upon the subject of radicalism. These hot words uttered in public would work your ruin."

Andrew Jackson, President of the United States, had threatened to hang Calhoun for his traitorous doctrines of secession. Notwithstanding, this great southerner precipitated the "1832 secession" of South Carolina.

"True," answered the younger, "but in my breast I have a pent up indignation, which at times defies all rules of prudence; and I am persuaded by such sense of injustice that I think more bitterly than I can speak. I admire the fire of the roving harnessmaker."

It is probable he referred to the great fanatic of the times—but nevertheless, truly wonderful and good man—Benjamin Lundy.

"Ah, now you recall some serious reflections," exclaimed the old man, begining a low but fervent address to all in the room. "Gentlemen, I cannot help thinking our cause is much older than most people appreciate." The two men at the press slowed down its movement and all hung upon Father Jerome's words. "Humanity has had a few great hearts in every era, however so dark the popular conscience of the times. Every generation has its Roger Williams who weeps for humanity or goes into exile for a cherished principle. Such men, I believe, are arising in our own time. We cannot now point them out, gentlemen, but they who come after us will look upon these times and single out the columns that project above the horizon. These men are like the generals of old who advanced to battle at the head of the fighting host. They appear in the front of the battle mingling with the smoke and carnage. They are not instantaneous products, for reform is slow. Therefore, I say our cause is not the growth of a day. Abolition is but a new name for an old idea, the inalienable rights of man. It is the old demand in new terms, of the liberty of universal man!" All eyes were upon

Father Jerome as he continued. "Two years before the signing of the Declaration of Independence the Quakers had organized the first abolition society. So faint by times has it been that people forgot of its existence. Slandered, libeled, bitterly ridiculed—forgotten! Yet, does it survive in the blush of increasing vigor. But such is the obloquy through which most reform has passed. Ours has passed that period, gentlemen, and to-day it has reached that height, from which, when once attained, political reforn never recedes!"

The old man's face lighting up with fervency he continued: "I refer, gentlemen, to that state of elective affinity, peculiar to the growth of social morals, which invariably appears at a certain stage of their development—a social magnitization, which causes political principles, after perhaps years of probation, to suddenly individualize within a single head, as by a stroke of divination. It is that stage of development, where the floating particles of moral truth, suddenly, as by a flash of lightning, precipitate the social elements into a torrent; a condition of the ethical atmosphere, which containing a spark of the divine, rushes magically into the breast of a single man, commanding his uttermost faculties. It is the hour of prophesy, electric eloquence and inspiration, which have for their warranty the seal of heaven. That hour in America is near at hand! Observe the signs! There will come a prophet!"

The old man ceased. His small audience were earnest, common men—reflective, meditative, slightly visionary; but such as have formed the masonry of

nations and hold together the structures of all civilization. Father Jerome's tones were low and strictly confined to his immediate auditors—deep, earnest, eloquent.

Prophetically he continued: "These are times filled with the foreshadowings of the oncoming revolution in sentiment which history says precedes the storm of war. These are the quickening times in the womb of public conscience, of that sentiment which may become vast as a moving sea. Human offerings are now being born; a thousand bloody alters are now being reared, whose smoke shall ascend to the battle sky in a generation to come. American politics, deeply inoculated far back in colonial days by the virus of chattleism in man is now beginning to show those symptoms of disease which may shortly become a reigning and unconquerable epidemic. From the beginning of our government there has been a disease in the body politic. From this springs innumerable other ills. At intervals of delerium there has been but one drug which offered anything like a cure to the stricken state. It is separation! But the cure, gentlemen, is far more severe than the fever." Here Father Jerome dropped to a low monotone, rising gradually to prophetic energy. "The climax must necessarily be reached sooner or later. I fear we needed a baptism of fire to purify the reeking state; a deluge from the sky to wash out the sewerage; a mighty electric shock to purify the atmosphere; and this—God defend us—nature has long been preparing in her secret and mysterions laboratory."

He ceased. The man at the press stood like a statue, with glimmering eyes and fist clinched. This individual had said but brief words during the entire evening. The young man at the corner of the table buried his fingers more deeply into his dark hair. His gray eyes were fixed in meditation. After some silence the press again began to move and all was busy.

These seven individuals continued their secret vocation far into the night; and when they had finished, some five thousand copies of "The Revolutionist" was ready for the morning mails. And Father Jerome—Ah, shall we speak it?—had committed the final act which resulted in so enraging his political enemies that they immediately sent forth their numerous, legal grab-hooks by which this offender was to be brought before the bar of justice. Their first stratagem, as I have said, had failed them. Father Jerome must be silenced. "Money, stocks, bonds, the security of huge investments" were threatened by such revolutionary spirits as his. From this particular hour Father Jerome's liberty grew swiftly to a close.

His financial distress was soon discovered, and instantly, was hurled upon his head, the curse of insolvency—quite terribly as effectual in silencing both tongue and pen, as death itself.

Marvelous indeed may it seem that the action of so many people was necessary in order that the destiny of Louise Pollard should be fully accomplished. But had not Father Jerome thus invited disaster, he never again would have met Louise Pollard; and had he never met her, she and her infant might have

silently sank unobserved into the waters of the past, as many another unknown has done—nor could we have known of Rosetta's love; nor of Doctor North; nor of Maurice Severgn.

CHAPTER XI.

AFFAIRE DU COEUR—THE MAELSTROM.

NO experience of the heart can more quickly or decisively awaken a man than the knowledge of the presence of an active and worthy rival. Such to me had become Henry Blakemore. Culture, refinement, wealth; vines, whose interlacing leaves and tendrils ornament the snowy frieze of life's temple; without which, the most God-like monolith in human form, is chill, barren, desolate!—such were the attributes of this man.

His unmistakable attentions toward Rose Cimarron since the hour of their first recognition, on that, to me, ever-memorable day in Central Park, had become all too pronounced for further passive endurance. Entirely careless of possible results, I had on that day innocently braved destiny for him—acted as the instrument of my future torture by calmly negotiating for him their friendly compact.

One evening, when according to appointment, I had arrived at the home of Rose Cimarron, a servant met me in the vestibule, smiling and handing me a note, saying—"Miss Cimarron is not at home."

Instantly flashed through my mind the picture of

Harry Blakemore. Unmindful of the gaze of the servant, a flame of emotion heretofore utterly foreign to me, leaped from my heart to my brain; and whilst my face was burning, I tore open the envelope and scaned the lines.

"DEAR C——: Though much regretting it, I will take the liberty to defer our meeting till to-morrow evening, when you will not fail to come prepared to impart so much of "The Mystery" as the time and your inclination will then permit. Knowing your generosity, I take this liberty.

"This evening I accompany Harry to the theatre, where we will enjoy Sardou's latest. Thanking you for this most chivalrous concession. ROSE."

I clutched the folds of the note and thrust it into my vest, said "good day," and walked away.

"Chivalrous concession—to the theatre! Harry! the devil!" muttered I as the flames swept over my face and perspiration burst from my forehead. My feelings were never more painful than then—never more bitter! I would fain have thrust them from me, but they would not go.

I went to my home; sat down in my easy chair. The silence of the walls of my room seemed to mock me. I did not know why, but immediately the ghostly visions, which the actor's art renders tangible in the play of Macbeth, paraded themselves before me, and again and again I heard that hollow, terrible voice, "No more—Sleep, no more!"—rolling along, reverberating through the halls and corridors of my imagination.

Foolish, strange but irresistible passion! I rushed from the house. Arriving at the box-office, I purchased my ticket and soon lost myself in the huge throng of the theatre. The curtain had arisen for the third act before I could trust myself to look about me. And yet, the presence of those eyes which I was now beginning to feel morally certain had been looking upon me, was painful the while for my mute and burning heart. When at last I cast my eyes about me, instantly as though under supernatural direction, they fell upon Rose Cimarron and Henry Blakemore. They occupied a box at the left of the stage. Never in all my previous life had I experienced such horrible emotions toward any man as did I at that moment toward my rival. It turned the play itself into a poisoned chalice held to my lips by the united hands of demonds. The triumphant laugh of the heroine, the foolish jealousy of the despairing lover swept down upon me like a flight of barbed arrows.

When the play had ended, and the throng were pushing along the walk from the theatre, suddenly I heard a familiar voice. I turned. There stood Rose with one foot upon the step of a cab, the door of which was open. She smiled, and gently nodded her head, then disappeared within. To me the clash of the door sounded like the crash of a convent gate. Never more perfect did Beauty array herself in Parian marble than did the grace of Rose Cimarron, a vision of whom then leaped into life before my mind.

Ah, fate of the human heart! I wandered home—seated myself as usual in my easy chair with my feet

resting on a Turkish foot-stool, and in the glare of the gas light sat dreaming of Rose Cimarron and wrestling with my emotions.

Deep at the midnight hour, finally I arose; looked into the mirror. My face was pale. "Fool!" gasped I—for it seemed to be written across my forehead—"What right have I thus to claim such title to her—to grasp her even in imagination to my heart?" Art, beauty, luxury, wealth—without those there could be no home thought I, for such as she. Never did I feel the bitterness of my own lot till then. Instantly with clinched fist, crystalized throughout my frame a herculean resolve.

The interest that Rose had displayed in the narrative of Louise Pollard, was one of more than ordinary character. Of this I became doubly assured, on the next evening, when upon her solicitation, I proceeded.

* * * * * * * * *

Let us not lift the veil which hides from the world the history of the old debtors' prison of New York. The detail if revealed, if but half set down, would furnish material for a volume in itself. Its victims have been legion. We shall not resuscitate the gloomy shades which lurk about this spot; nor ask of the past to yield up its dreadful legends. Let us drop it all in the briefest possible space.

The Provost borrowed its name from a certain part it had performed in the drama of the American Revolution. During those bloody days it was used by the British as a prison for patriots, and the uncommon

brutality of one Cunningham, a Provost Marshal, who tyranized over the luckless prisoners,left it a legacy in the shape of a nickname, it ever after being called the "Old Provost." Up to 1832, the year in which its destiny as a goal for debtors closed, it had been used as a police-court and a prison for unfortunate humanity whose rags had been caught in the wheels of the law of debt.

When the poor Siberian peasant on the banks of the River Lena found the remains of the mammoth he shrank in terror from the spot. So likewise the student of history is shocked when before his eyes stalk by times those monstrosities of the law which once walked among men under the name of Justice. "If a person be taken in execution and lies in prison for debt he is not to be provided with meat, drink or clothes, but he must live on his own and on the charity of others; and if no man will relieve him let him die in the name of God says the law, and so say I." These are words from the pen of an old English law giver.

True the law of debt was slightly relaxed of its ancient rigour during the period we now portray, but enough of it remained to chill the victim into horror, for then it sometimes meant imprisonment for life! From a legal writer in the times of Father Jerome we learn by the common law that the creditor after first having stripped the debtor of his property by a "fiere facias" might if the claim remained unsatisfied throw him into prison and keep him there for life—unless he found means to discharge the obligation. His body was held as satisfaction of the debt. Though by the

Lord's act, passed on the 32d year of the reign of George II., upon which the insolvent laws of New York were founded, the debtor might be relieved from imprisonment upon surrendering all his effects to his creditors unless the latter consented to pay two and a six pence a day for his maintenance.

Father Jerome writhed and struggled as best the debtor could in his day, but in the maelstrom of bankruptcy sank swiftly all his earthly store, whilst in the unquenchable jaws of his political enemies who had precipitated this calamity was his body fastened as in a vice. For they could well afford to pay two and a sixpence a day for that which so silenced his tongue and pen.

But let us rush to the issue of Father Jerome's case and not stop to recount the painful details of disaster which suddenly one day swept down upon him like a cloud of sand upon the desert-traveling Bedouin covering himself, his home and the light of his age, little Margaret, in the darkness of utter despair.

For a great number of years Father Jerome had paid ruinous interest on a heavy mortgage. By this slavery he had kept his roof above his head and a little hope in his heart. He had thus far also appeased the hunger of two judgment creditors by judicious small payments from time to time. This had preserved him the possession of his household effects and his bench and tools.

One day the mortgage changed hands, and directly in as brief a space of time as it took to walk from the recorder's office to the little cottage, a knock was

heard at the door. As was the custom, Margaret innocently escorted the stranger into the presence of Father Jerome, who was then toiling at his bench in the basement. The stranger was seated. After some time Father Jerome turned slowly on his stool, took from his pocket a dusty handkerchief and first wiping the perspiration from his brow began mechanically cleaning his glasses, while calmly awaiting the business of the gentleman.

The stranger arose—"Your name is Gillespie B. Jerome?"—"It is," answered Father Jerome, slightly perplexed. The stranger drew a paper from his pocket upon which appeared a seal and an amount of printed and written matter. This was rather remarkable. Father Jerome did not move; he instantly apprehended all; he became fixed as a statue of bronze. His grand-child was also spell-bound. She stood upon the last step of the stairs. Her eyes were riveted upon the intruder and the fingers of her left hand were unconsciously pressed against her silent lips in apprehensive fear.

The stranger immediately began to read the document aloud. Instantly Margaret's eyes turned to Father Jerome. His face had become pale, and the fingers of one hand were seen nervously twitching. The reading had proceeded some lines, and Father Jerome had not breathed since from the first word. Presently Margaret perceived large drops of sweat forming upon her grandfather's brow, mysteriously clinging there like heavy dew on cold marble. Father Jerome was being served with legal notice of foreclosure.

When the officer finished, his listener gasped for breath but did not move. The officer then handed him a copy of the paper; then coolly lighting his cigar said "good day," and retired from the house. This paper briefly informed Father Jerome that he was homeless. This was not all: In less than twenty-four hours from that moment his household effects were seized, instantly to be followed by seizure of his bench and work-tools, together with the little press and the case of type.

This was not the end. Father Jerome knew it. The wrath of unsatisfied creditors gathered force by the minute, like a pack of disappointed wolves that have come late and hungry upon a victim entirely ravished of its flesh, savagely tossing the polished bones about the earth. Slowly the grim shadow of the inevitable debtor's jail arose in the mind of this old man. The realization of the prophetic dreams of a wakeful pillow had finally come like the blast of the Simoon upon the Libian sands—like a hurricane upon the Indian seas.

Men at sixty seldom if ever recover from a financial wreck, for it is the vortex of life.

Through the vista of ten years had Father Jerome watched this coming tempest. The shock was terrific. Storm-ridden for days, suddenly there was a dismembering of the ship and all went out in utter darkness. The horizons of the last ten years had hung heavy with tempest. At no point of the compass could he avoid its encircling clouds. One day there was a crash, a flame from a cloud, and Father Jerome knew

he was resting upon the giddy rim of a maelstrom. At seventy years, the Provost—my God! An ashy paleness spread over his face and his gray locks seemed to grow momentarily whiter.

From the first shock he knew himself whirling, sinking, sinking–swiftly and more swiftly–down, down each day nearer the cavity, deep into utter gloom. Then succeeded a sudden darkness as if the sun had gone out forever—and it had for him. And there was a sound as of the rush of waters; the disaster so long beaten back—so despairingly—had approached, and swiftly as speeds the wreckage in maddening, downward flight into the cavern of the sea, he felt all hope depart.

These are times when the mind scatters and the nerves quiver, the heart stands still and the gasping wretch with pale face and uplifted palms silently appeals unto his God, who e'er he be. Father Jerome's lips were firmly pressed. Stoic heroism! He made no murmur. He was led to prison. With him went little Margaret, from whose cheeks the color of life had fled; into whose visage came blank despair. Through the long streets they were taken, their steps more dead than alive; he a physical wreck, she a child, touched for the first time with the icy vapor of this world's woe.

Theirs was a dark cell, lighted only by the weak beams of a sperm candle. Near by was an aged cot. It had been in the Provost for years. In it had pined many a heart as sadly shattered as that of poor Margaret's—many a head as hoary as that of Father Jerome's.

CHAPTER XII.

A VISITOR FROM THE SOCIETY OF THE HUMANE.

FATHER JEROME was among the last inmates of the Old Provost, and if the records shed positive light he was one among the debtors whose sad story finally awakened the voice of humanity and tore from the statute books of New York that law which made debt a crime.

Owing to the youthfulness of Margaret she also became an inmate of the prison, and the pressing creditors were called on to furnish a small daily stipend for their existence. Yet Margaret, so womanly at her age, grasped the situation and set about to find employment. In a short time she found labor in a clasp-factory where buttons, hooks, clasps and buckles were made in wholesale quantity for the public.

Time at the Old Provost slipped on into the fall, and the leaves of the great poplars which shed their shades about the park assumed the tints of October. A few weeks more and frost whitened the morning walks and proclaimed the approach of winter.

It was in the latter part of October, or the beginning of November, and time at the Provost was beginning to tell upon the frame of Father Jerome. His iron constitution which for over seventy years had so faithfully served him was now breaking. His skin had become dried and lifeless, like parchment. His hair had become entirely white.

In the park walks about the Provost great shoals of leaves from the over-hanging poplars had gathered, and by times was felt in early morn or late at night the just perceptible touch of oncoming atmospheric change. It was about this time in the fall when Father Jerome's case was reached by the court, but all the powers of man exerted in his behalf seemed only to bury him deeper. His official discharge from the army upon which he much depended to finally release him from prison could not be found. The determination of his creditors was fixed like adamant, and now the bolts seemed to close forever; for the debt was large, and Father Jerome well knew no pitying hand would reach down into that cell to unbind the fetters. Finally, after many weary months, the old man settled down to the monotony of prison life; dreaming no more, as it is the wont of those hopelessly confined, of some miraculous deliverance. By times he grew pettish; at early hours looked longingly for the child or listened for her footsteps upon the stair in the evening time. When he retired at night oft did he pray that he might pass quietly off and never again awaken to the morning sun; but when his eyes would fall upon Margaret he would retract his feelings.

Winter at the Provost was a most serious affair! Close up to the huge grate in the big room, where by times congregated the inmate debtors, drolling over many a winter's tale, these unfortunates gathered to catch a ray of warmth from the weak flames which by times burned there. And now it was that the "story

of Wilkins," a former inmate, was told over to sympathizing listeners; how for years he lived within those same walls until he finally died and was taken to the potter's field. Indeed many were they whose footsteps could be traced from the Provost to that desolate spot. Ruminating upon the ills of earth, and philosophizing upon the problems of life in general, the debtors at the Old Provost finished the winter of 1830.

By degrees the frost crept through the walls, the winter chill permeated every cranny, and winter had begun in earnest. At no time was there a plenty of coal at the gaol. And there were days in which the inmates crept about from cell to cell and down the corridors, binding their tattered garments tightly about their bodies to keep warm.

One evening, perhaps it was then about the middle of December, when all the debtors had retired from the large room and none but Father Jerome and his little grand-daughter remained, noticing an unusual glow upon her cheek, Father Jerome inquired: "Margaret, my child, come here," and placing his hand on her forehead he added: "Do you feel ill? You have fever."

"I am well, father, but Oh, I am so drowsy and by times I feel like I was going to have a chill."

That night Margaret was taken sick.

Now began a series of evils not yet anticipated by Father Jerome. The physician who cared for the patients at the Bridewell and the Provost was summoned. Now it so happened that this august official

could not come. He therefore sent his assistant, Dr. North, a young man who had just received his degree as physician and surgeon. Though there was nothing remarkable in this, yet it is interesting since the fate of Margaret was destined to become somewhat entwined with the life of this young man. When he arrived he directed that the child should be taken to warmer quarters, to the City Hospital, or to some kind friend, saying in the same breath that the child was threatened with typhoid fever. Father Jerome hesitated. Margaret also preferred to remain at the Provost. Finally a cot was prepared for her in the debtors' big room, near the grate in which a slow coal fire was kept blazing all the time.

Now began those long hours of watching, waiting and suffering by night and by day, known to many an experienced parent. But few who have passed through such sickness can measure the anxiety of this old grand-father—shut up between those prison walls watching by night and day over the stricken form of his little orphan patient. Hour upon hour came slowly dragging their weary lengths. Finally the day of all days, the most feared approached, and the delirium which was wrenching the sick girl's brain culminated in its wildest flights and took on its most serious shadings. Vainly did Father Jerome strive to soothe her. "Is it not summertime, grandfather? I see vines and roses all over the walls!" "Yes, my child," answered he, thinking to calm her. "Will they put her and all of us in the mad house, father?" "Who, my darling?"

"Louise!"

"Oh no, Margaret, you must not be troubled."

Margaret's eyes were staring wildly. At times they failed to recognize the aged face that bent above her. Her eyebrows would clinch together as if she struggled with mental pain, then with a quick start she would raise her head from the pillow, sinking slowly back again with an inarticulate murmur.

The poorly lighted apartments of the Provost were always choked with night before the setting of the sun. In there the gloom of darkness began an hour earlier than to the outside world. On cloud-overcast days there was but a twilight within the gaol.

It was on one of these evenings of darkness, after a day of whirling December storms outside and hours filled with the broken sentences of the sick inside that a young woman clothed in warm but cheap garments, bespeaking her one of the poor, came to the Provost and inquired for Father Jerome. Over her face was drawn a veil, hiding completely her visage. Her hands were clothed in dark woolen mittens. She spoke briefly to the guard, neither inviting or responding to conversation.

In the big room on the second floor near the cot sat Father Jerome, his elbows upon his knees, his hands upon his chin, his body bent into a heap, his eyes gloating upon the fiery midgets that danced upon the small lumps of burning coal, his mind completely absorbed in revery. About his brow and temples fell his white hair, which gleamed in the dim light like threads of thinly spun silver. Upon his thoughtful face

were written the deep indentures of age. Margaret had fallen asleep. Upon her golden hair, which hung over the pillow and the half revealed face, trembled the ghastly beams of the consuming coal of the grate. Her breathing was regular. Her lips were beautifully closed, and there was a momentary calm upon her face. The old man gently touched her brow with his palm. The pulse of fever was there but not so intense as it had been through the day.

Outside whirled and chattered the winter storm. The casements chafed with the hard balls of fine snow. The cry of the blast was by times heard about the roof, and the trees in the park—now draped in snow or mailed in ice—hissed or groaned, whilst through their branches aloft gushed an evanescent winter gale. A weak candle of sperm shed a dim light in the room, but dispelled not the darkness, for its flame had withered into a puny spark upon the dying wick.

Suddenly there was a noise below, like ascending footsteps. Father Jerome bent his attention toward the door, for it was a strange hour for visitors. Presently without warning the bolts were drawn; the huge door swung upon its hinges and a guard ushered in the young woman to whom we have referred.

In a low voice the guard announced the presence of a stranger who had "come from The Society of the Humane to visit the child."

The old man arose and offered the lady his chair near the cot. The guard closed the door behind him, and approached the couch of the child.

The woman also came up until the beams of the

grate, aided by the candle, lighted up her now half-disclosed face, showing distinctly the forehead and eyebrows. Father Jerome was endeavoring to glean a token of recognition from her face by the assistance of the small candle which he held in his hand.

"We had not heard of the child's sickness till yesterday. How long has she been sick?" asked the woman.

Father Jerome's eyes were riveted upon the partially revealed face. Presently he looked at the guard, who was studying the woman, then quickly returning his eyes to the pale brow he quietly set the candle down upon the table, but did not answer.

"This is her ninth day," finally answered the guard, then added—"Father Jerome is growing deaf." The woman then set a small basket upon the table, and looking in the direction of the cot she remarked, with a significant glance at the face of Father Jerome —"To-morrow give this to the child."

"When you need me, knock upon the door," presently remarked the guard. "Thank you," answered the woman, at the same time taking a seat near the cot. The guard retired and drew the bolts after him. The three were then entirely alone. Margaret was sleeping. Father Jerome had as yet made no remark. His guest slightly drew aside her hood and veil, at which Father Jerome started, while his eyes were still fixed upon her face. Presently he exclaimed: "I had thought myself submerged beyond the reach of human solicitude."

"Only death alone can accomplish this," answered

the woman with a sad smile. Father Jerome still hesitated, for the light was dim and his eyes were too weak to search out the lineaments of the woman's face. Presently as if he had suddenly recalled the face of this woman he started, holding forth both his arms—"What, you here!" exclaimed he. The woman placed her fingers to her lips, looked about the room, then beckoned Father Jerome to a seat beside her. He obeyed. They were immediately engaged in a low conversation, which was certainly of the most secret nature, for the words were inaudible. By times the woman bent affectionately above the couch of little Margaret and softly touched her fevered brow. Finally the conversation ended, and they both sat thoughtfully looking into the grate. Presently the woman raised a handkerchief to her eyes. She had been weeping. She arose, stooped and lightly kissed Margaret upon the brow, then approaching Father Jerome, who had also arisen, she grasped his feeble hand, murmuring in her tears, "May God bless and protect you, father, and restore the health of little Margaret"—saying, she slowly vanished into the shadow and knocked upon the door. After a time the door opened and she passed out. Father Jerome listened till the sound of her footsteps receded out of hearing. Then placing the candle upon the mantle he took his seat near the cot, where soon his eyes were again fastened upon the dreamy flames.

Up the chimney the small curl of smoke ascended from the puny bed of burning coals. Again the rush of the gale outside, the hiss of the snow against the

window, and the pulse of the flame causing the shadows to recede and come upon the wall, reminded the debtor of his fate. Slowly the night wore on.

Twice Margaret had spoken inarticulately in her sleep, and once she awakened with a start and cried. Father Jerome, kneeling by her side, caressed her brow, bent his head above her and stroking her hand reassured her; frightening away those dragons which come to us in the night of delirium flapping their hideous wings above our heads.

Thus did the hours proceed till the creak of vehicles passing in the street, and gray twilight falling through the prison bars denoted the approach of morning. In an hour more the red disk of the morning sun crept up from behind the intervening houses, arising sullenly in the sickly mist of silent frost, which far out above the waters of the ocean hung like a cloak.

CHAPTER XIII.

I HAVE SAID FAREWELL.

"MARGARET is looking better," meditated Father Jerome on the morning following the visit. Margaret had awakened slightly refreshed from her intermittent slumbers, and after bathing her face and hands and drying with clean linen she ate a delicate morsel. When the morning had advanced, Father Jerome brought to the sick couch the small basket left by the woman. "Here my child," said he, handing the basket to the surprised girl, who with hesitation finally held forth her hands and received

the gift. "Take it," added he; "a kind lady who came late last evening left it for you. See Margaret, I have not disturbed it, for it was left entirely for you."

Margaret slowly began to explore the interior of the tiny basket, and found it to contain a package of pins, needles and thread, a neat linen handkerchief which was labeled "Father," and lastly in the bottom a beautiful, soft white woolen hood and a pair of knit mittens, in each of which there was deposited a silver half dollar.

"Why father, who was she?" inquired Margaret.

"A lady from the Society of the Humane," answered Father Jerome. Margaret fell back on her pillow in quiet meditation. She knew all about this beautiful organization of charitable women whose deeds of mercy were famous among the poor, but the answer in no wise satisfied her.

The episode detailed in the previous chapter served to break the otherwise dreary monotony of the long winter day. Time passed and finally the red sunset of evening was at hand. "Grandfather, is this not Christmas Eve?" Inquired Margaret. "It is my child. Have you not heard a great jingling of bells in the street? There is a heavy snow and people are enjoying it with their sleighs."

Tears came into Margaret's eyes, and she sadly turned on her pillow, but catching sight of the beautiful white hood in the basket which Father Jerome had placed near, she remarked: "But we were not forgotten, were we? Do you think she will return this evening?"

"I do Margaret."

"Father!" exclaimed she in a whisper. The old man came close. "I wonder where Louise is to-night?"

"I believe she is safe, my child." "Could we not get the good woman who came last night to take this money to Louise? Perhaps we had better inform the Society of the Humane of Louise, father?"

"Poor Margaret!" soliloquized Father Jerome. "God pity my child—shut up in this cell. God pity her! Must I see her die in this wretched den? And I cannot help her. And God pity poor Louise," he exclaimed, pressing his temples with both hands in anguish. "God pity my poor sick child!"

Going to one of the windows he looked out into the night and saw where the rising moon had turned the ice upon the trees into a mail of various colored crystal, coating the earth with the shades of silver. Far and wide from the busy streets came to his ears the jingle of bells from swiftly gliding sleighs, and voices, those of the happy world without, rang upon his senses till he sadly walked away. Presently there was a noise upon the stair and Father Jerome leaned forward from where he stood, listening with the silence of a child, for his visitor had promised to come again that evening.

"It is she!" exclaimed Margaret, raising upon her trembling arm, and looking through the dark at the door faintly outlined by the flame of the grate.

Father Jerome had just lighted a small candle at the grate and now stood holding it in his hand. Pres-

ently the bolts in the door slid back and a voice announced, "A lady to see the sick child." The door again closed and the visitor alone slowly approached through the shadows.

"You must talk in a very low voice, my child," whispered Father Jerome to Margaret who had raised her body, supporting herself on her elbow. The light from the grate gleamed upon Margaret's beautiful golden hair and displayed her neck and breast as her sleeping-gown had slid gently back upon her shoulder. The woman was but a moment in reaching the couch. Stretching forth her arms she grasped Margaret to her, kissing her upon her forehead and eyes. "Margaret, my sister, do not cry out. It is I!" murmured Louise Pollard.

"Louise!" gasped Margaret, withdrawing in amazement.

"Yes, it is I."

There was a momentary silence. Tears were starting from Margaret's eyes. "How glad we are to see you again! How did you find us? Did the good woman tell you of us?" cried Margaret.

Clinging affectionately upon the woman's neck, "Oh, Louise!" cried she, "How I have looked for you in every street, yes in all the byways; how I have sought you at every hour, watched for you in the throngs, waited at the doors of churches and looked into every face, but could not find you!" Suddenly Louise glanced about the room—she was weeping—"Hush, my sweet Margaret! Do not speak loud!" exclaimed she, trembling; hugging Margaret tightly to her throbbing

breast, and covering her face with a rain of hot tears. "Ah, Margaret, I have seen you by times, but dared not speak. I have crept along by your side for many steps at a time, but dared not touch you. Once I saw you and I kissed your shawl, and I wept that I could not speak. Silence! silence, Margaret, for all the love you have for me, do not forget yourself—let every one speak low."

It was very evident to Father Jerome that something had happened Louise, for her eyes were deliriously gleaming.

"Come close father," exclaimed she in a whisper. "Bury your gray head closer that none may hear. Hark to me! I am safe, but my God! I am certain that I am being watched, tracked, hunted like a beast of the forest. Oh, look upon me!" She held up her arms in pitiful appeal. "Oh great God of Heaven, I have done no wrong; and yet do not the mountains rest upon me? I have not sinned, yet have I not been forced to crawl among the vermin? Is not daylight denied me? Can I safely go forth in the streets? No! No! Come closer, father, we may be overheard. I am accustomed to breathing my words close into the ear of mutual misery. Come close! These walls have ears. Hark! is there no one at the door?" Their three faces were very close together. Louise whispered very low. "I have reason to believe that I was tracked fully half way to the prison." Suddenly, with a certain, fatal, indescribable gleam in her eyes—piercing into the very depths of Father Jerome's soul, in a low voice she exclaimed—"Father, shall I slay myself?"

"Alas, God hasten his mercy upon you: I know not!" distractedly answered Father Jerome. "But my child! father—alas, my infant boy!" Louise buried her weeping face in the old man's palms. "And I cannot help you!" murmured Father Jerome, whilst his firmly fixed eyes stared vacantly into the shadows.

"Hark!" exclaimed Margaret, "I hear footsteps." "It is perhaps the city physician," remarked Father Jerome. Louise rearranged her hood and carefully pulled down her veil. Presently the bolts were drawn and a form entered. "Bring me an oil lamp and light up this dismal den," remarked the physician to the guard.

"It is Doctor North," exclaimed Margaret, drawing the covers about her shoulders. "Then there is no danger," whispered Father Jerome to Louise Pollard.

The Doctor finally came forward alone and set the lamp and his medicine case upon the table, then took a seat near the couch. "Well, how are you Margaret?" inquired the young man, unmindful of the presence of the other two. "I am getting better, Doctor, every day." "Ah, I see you are. Father, Margaret's fever has broken," exclaimed the young man, tenderly raising his hand from Margaret's brow from which heavy drops of perspiration glided down across her temples. He then took her wrist between his fingers, and in a few moments remarked: "Your pulse is quite normal Margaret—considering. Now with proper care, all will be well; but not without patience—it will require extraordinary patience on

your part, Margaret," remarked the young physician with characteristic thoughtfulness. "Father Jerome," exclaimed he, turning on his chair—"What!, This is certainly not—"

"Louise," murmured Father Jerome.

"Silence! Doctor. For the grace of Heaven do not speak my name aloud," whispered Louise Pollard, startled. "Yes, it is I."

"Your child—?"

"It is safe," tenderly interrupted the young mother. There was a cadence of melancholy in her voice which touched the young man. "Louise, are you in need?"

"Need, Doctor—yes!" answered she in meditation, but with an equivocal inflection. "Yes—in need!" The young man appealed to Father Jerome with his eyes; then to Louise. "Louise, why have you not spoken?"

"I have."

"But to whom?"

Louise cast her melancholy eyes upon the floor. "Him to whom Father Jerome has called."

Father Jerome made no answer to the quick inquiring glance of the young man. "To whom, Louise, have you spoken?"

"To God."

"To God—to God!" meditated the young man in the silence, thoughtfully looking into the puny fire; then casting his eyes upon Margaret's beautiful hair which spread out over the pillow like little threads of gold. "How many people to-night, are doing the same!" muttered he.

"Yea—upon their knees, *groaning* to God!" lowly echoed Louise Pollard.

"And, does he not answer you?" meekly inquired Margaret casting her large blue eyes upon Louise. Louise Pollard was silent. Her eyes were fixed upon the floor. Her melancholy mouth was tightly closed. Presently she opened her eyelids and a tear trinkled down her cheek. It was evident to all, that a bitter struggle was then engaging her mind. In a moment, quietly she arose from her seat and took from a hand-bag which she carried, a small box, securely tied with a twine. She had grown visibly paler. Presently she opened her tightly pressed lips and said: "Father; in this I have placed that which I would keep sacred from all"—she hesitated—"from all, but my child —my child! If in the future, I return, I will claim it. If I should not return—" continued she, pitifully struggling—"alas, my God!—I know not—" her mind was slightly wandering; her pale lips quivered, as her eyes nervously changed position—"alas, I know not if I may see you again." The old man's eyes dilated, as his outstretched hand slowly closed upon the box. The young man had arisen from his chair. "If the flight of many months, bring no tidings of me—in this, you will find—that which I wish—preserved for my infant child." She then approached the bedside of the sick girl, and kneeling, she clasped Margaret's golden head to her breast, whispering to her with quivering lips: "Margaret, believe in God, though he seems to forget us! Margaret, I may never see you again." Margaret buried her face in the folds of Louise's bosom and

wept bitterly. Father Jerome slowly walked up to the couch and knelt down by the side of the young woman. His lips were closed in a struggle with his mind. His eyes were fixed upon the blank darkness in front. In a moment his spirit seemed to break from the bondage of years as he leaned forward and buried his face in the soft pillow, clutching at his white locks with his uplifted hands, quivering throughout his body. There was silence. Father Jerome was unfamiliar with religious rituals. His prayers were silent. They were upheavals of the human heart—resolutions of adamant —sorrows that quiver silently throughout the ethers of space.

The young man was affected. Resting with his elbow upon the table, his hand tightly clutching his brow, resolutely he clinched his strong right hand and muttered to himself: "From this time forth—to the end of life!" His eyes were gleaming in the lamp light.

For some moments no audible sound had disturbed the silence. Father Jerome had not raised his face from the pillow. Presently he heard the young man pleading "But in this lonely night will you not need my aid?" Some feet away, stood Louise Pollard, partially obscured by the shadows. The young man stood near her. Margaret had buried her weeping face in her pillow. "Are you going, Louise?" inquired Father Jerome, slowly staggering toward her. "Yes, father; I have said—farewell." She reached forth her hand. The old man pressed it to his bosom. "No, Doctor, I thank you. I do not apprehend I shall

need aid. I feel I shall reach home safely," answered Louise.

Then she tenderly withdrew her hand and knocked upon the bolted door. There was a long silence. Presently the bolts rattled, the door opened, and her shadowy form silently disappeared.

CHAPTER XIV.

A PHANTOM OF THE MIST.

SINCE the departure of Louise, two weeks had now elapsed. Her whereabouts had become a matter of anxiety to Father Jerome. A third week passed; but no tidings.

"I have said farewell." This terrible sentence lingered in the mind of those who had heard it. It haunted the old prison awakening Father Jerome's pillow like a ghost. A fifth week was approaching. Louise had not yet returned. Father Jerome summoned his young friend. For some moments their conversation was devoted to Father Jerome's case. If he could obtain a reissue of his papers of discharge from the army, or even, a sworn transcript of the records at Washington, he might hope for a release from prison.

"Doctor, the human mind is made of adamantive stuff, else few there are who could stand the strain of misfortune," remarked Father Jerome. The young man was silent, although his mind painfully labored for reply. For "what philosophy," thought he, "can condole with age and dispair?" He looked about

him and heard the cold winds chafing in the window casements. Finally he inquired: "It is now the first month of spring. Have you received any news from Washington?"

"Yes, Doctor, a full investigation of my case will be shortly entered by the War Department."

"Shortly!" reported the young man exasperated at the delay.

"Yes. But make haste! It is not of myself that I am now worried. Tell me all that you have learned concerning Louise?"

"Nothing!" was the answer.

"Are you keeping close watch upon the daily news?"

"Yes, father, but not the slightest clue has yet been noted. Besides, my exploration in that vicinity where she is likely secreted has yielded nothing."

"Doctor, I fear something disastrous. Louise certainly intended a return visit, having left no inscription on the box."

"Has the box a seal?"

"No. But it is a trust, to be kept for her child, and I dare not open it."

"How will it be possible, father, for you to execute this trust, having no knowledge of the whereabouts of the child?"

"The old man hesitated. "What shall be done?"

"Open the box," was the answer. Father Jerome drew the box from the inside pocket of his coat, and holding it in his trembling hands, inspected it carefully. "We will wait till to-morrow," answered he.

Time past and no tidings came.

Only the briefest account of the truth can here be related.

It was evening time—perhaps as late as May. Down in that locality where the bristling masts of ocean vessels are to be seen, and ships lie quietly in the embrace of the slips, a young woman was seen standing on a lonely wharf by the side of which the deep dark waters glided along to meet the bay. Behind the clouds in the west which at an early hour had cast a grayish light over the earth the sun had long since sunken behind a curtain of prophetic storms. Far out at sea the seamen had noted the wild and capricious flight of screaming gulls. There was an increasing gale. Finally night settled down with her leaden mantel, and the dusk of evening cloaked and hooded by the river mist, thickened the evening air like a dark veil.

Strange this lonely being had not attracted the notice of the watchman, for few suspicious characters escape their vigilance. What meant Louise Pollard at this late hour standing like a spectre in the evening mist? She approached the fatal edge of the wharf and stood for a moment looking down into the lonely waters. The tide that alternately raised and lowered, rippled along the sea-wall of spiling. Presently a form arose out of the shadows and slowly approached her, apparently unconscious of the presence of any other being. Louise started. Before her, in the dusk, stood the woman whose exquisite lineaments had so enchanted her whilst she was passing through the apartments of the home of Black Sally.

For a moment both young women stood mutely gazing into each other's faces. No words were necessary. Their countenances were an open book wherein each could read the other's thoughts. Louise's face was composed, though very pale. Her brow which shone beneath the fold of a thin dark shawl which was fastened about her head was white and pure in its profound resignation. The face of the stranger was written deep with the marks of agony—pale, the eyes gleaming, the forehead crimped, the corners of the mouth drawn—goaded by misfortune, lashed by the whip of conscience, consumed by a hell of memory. Presently her hollow voice lowly broke the silence. "The wages of sin are death. May God have mercy on our souls!"

Louise was too occupied to make reply. She felt the sacred presence of the Infinite.

Neither of the women had noted the presence of a distant watchman who was steadily approaching through the shadows. Presently a watery billow burst along the wall and sent its soft wet spray admonishingly upon their feet. The watchman again looked but the two dim forms were gone—invisibly melted into the rolling mist.

CHAPTER XV.

A SILHOUETTE.

AWAY! Let us away. Up from the sweltering valley of dust; far into the mountains, let us be off. Let us leave prison cells, torture, misery, penury. Let us break through the clouds and breathe for a moment the heaven-indued lining beyond! As from a trance, let us awaken in a new land and a new era!

The delicate threads that bind together the clues of the mystery have suddenly snapped asunder—one part floating on and on, over hill and dale, mountain, valley and stream, until caught in a favoring gale and wafted earthward again, to entwine its slender fingers in a new land and a new era.

Imagine a mountain solitude. Crags, cliffs, rocks, heights, forests and little mountain streams—the crust of God's earth disturbed by a mighty ploughshare—the ragged surface slackened and molded through the frosts and rains of eons—clouds and patches of sky that from the deep ravine seemed to rest on the tops of rude, moss-covered castles and ladders of lofty rocks—no voice save that from the whispering lips of nature—peaceful, calm.

It is the year 1852—autumn in one of nature's romantic solitudes. Upon the crest of the Tennessee mountains the morning sun is brightly dawning. Deep in the valley rests the sleeping mists of night. Like dim, mysterious phantoms, from the lowlands at

intervals arise on humied wings the slowly moving fogs. Silent are the leaves of the hickory, walnut and pine. By the banks of the mountain stream, which tumbles its waters into the Ohio far to the north, stand the silent forms of tenebrious willows, each drooping its slender, dewy limbs in the morning sun, which alternately advances and retreats through the swiftly vanishing mists. Up the mountain heights steadily creeps the sun, bursting into yellow flames from out the opal fountains of the sky; setting on fire with transitory colors the changing flocks of eastern clouds. One by one arise to view the lesser heights and elevations, showing here and there a small, grass-covered plateau, or mountainous hill, girded with forest.

Here and there stands forth a crag, whilst far up, on some desolate height lies the trunk of a pine, prone upon its side—its long fingers pointing to the vale, its roots heaved up from a huge bed of clay by some past mountain storm.

But in this mountain solitude of crag, sunshine, forest and hill, one feature, solitary and alone, with impressive significance, animates the scene of natural grandeur.

As the morning sun upon the horizon now stretches forth his arms of light, to clasp the crags and mountain sides in beams of amorous ether; upon a lofty, precipitous cliff, overlooking the little stream stands the form of a man—his body visible in the morning light. At the base of the cliff upon which he stands, some hundred feet below, lies the brown form of an

enormous bolder. Upon its engraven sides are the marks of an old glacier, and at its solemn base stands an enormous pine whose majestic top scarcely touches the threatening stony crown; whilst far, far below, slanting obliquely to the valley, spreads out the mountain base—its feet laved in the stream. Upon this slanting mountain base stands a thick growth of forest, amidst which appear tall pines like huge darts shot from on high as seen from the cliff over-looking them.

Whilst as yet the gray light of morning steals in slowly vanishing shadows from out the valley; upon the edge of the cliff sat the stranger musing upon the upturned face of nature; calmly tracing the outline of hill and mountain, crag and steep, and the dimly lighted waters, whose silvery gleam by times shot through its fastly fading canopy of mist. Perhaps he is watching the long, flaming bands of light; those indescribable tints which come up with the sun—nowhere so gorgeous as in the mountain solitudes—now blushing to red, now melting into orange, or fading throughout the fathomless depths into pearl; mingling in the awful spaces beyond their majestically beautiful ethers.

Perhaps he listens to the voice of nature as she speaks from out that vast solitude of slumbering hills; or rejoices in the indescribable beauty of light and shadow, stealing from over a mountain crag, hoary with a thousand centuries.

Perhaps from that lofty niche, that silent dreamy height, swathed in the weird light of the morning

and the peacefully creeping mountain air he dreams of the human thousands now slowly arising from the couch of sleep at the first touch of the morning sun, awakening the world to the unending battle of life.

Naught disturbs the repose of nature. All is calm, except perhaps a slight trembling in the forest leaves touched by the morning air which arises as the sun mounts into the sky.

From no point in the valley could it have been discerned, how it were in the bounds of human effort to gain the height upon which so composedly sat this being.

The cliff fronted the east, frowning upon the stream a thousand feet away, staring with grim face upon the neighboring eastern mountain. How long through the night of the awful past it had silently o'erlooked the vale like some huge frontal bone of human skull, jutting from out the mountain side, let nature and her mysteries fathom. Upon its perpendicular face, over which the storms had swept for untold ages—marking the eras of a mysterious past—brooded an eternal calm seen upon many a mountain cliff, bespeaking the awe which nature wears when, contemplative, she sits ruminating upon her own grandeur.

The otherwise smooth face of the cliff was at points slightly broken by projecting ledges, upon which grew stunted vines, wild roses and perennial creepers—their fingers thrust into the riven stone or plastered to the smooth face of the perpendicular declivity.

Upon the north all passage was blocked by a great tree which in time past had been swept from its mountain home by a blast of lightning or the whirl of a tempest. Massive rocks also lay about, lifted from their homes in the earth by the incessant efforts of the frost through long ages of unremitting toil; or perhaps deposited there by that mythical monster, the Ice King in glacial days. On the south, nature had left one possible means of ascent. And by it, if persued with skill up its steep as well as sinuous trail, a footman could make his way into a niche in the cliff where we first find the being whose presence from the valley certainly would seem the most enigmatical.

As he sat there upon that verge, to the naked eye he had the appearance of some mountain bird, which had alighted for a time to plume its wings in the light of the morning sun; but when he arose—as some times he did—and placed his hand to his brow, sweeping all within the field of vision open to him, his form stood defined against the white wall of the niche.

Above his head the trunk of a pine which had been stripped of limbs and bark, and polished by innumerable storms, pointed from the brow of the cliff like a great ivory horn.

After a time the sun had arisen above the broken horizon, and now those desolate heights were showered with light; and the rugged, stony faces, clearly defined, in unspeakable reverence uplifted their visage to the sky, or upon the valley bent in calm pensiveness.

Below, slowly awakening from its mists, shone the stream winding peacefully through the hills, clothed

on either side with ragged forest and spots of green, with here and there a sharply defined bluff.

Far above in the sky, in apparent proximity to a small feathery cloud, soared a huge bird—eagle or vulture—sailing in a tremendous circle with a radius of at least a mile. Throughout the vast solitude—but two animate creatures—the man in the niche upon that dizzy cliff, and the bird from its height looking down upon the mountain tops, the bald knobs, the projecting cliffs and towers. Silent—majestic! But alas! That beautiful placidity of nature was soon to be broken. With the screams of death, to be terrorized!

As if in prescience of the drama about to be enacted, those majestic heights were arranged about in silent awe, looking upon each other and the timid stream whose tongueless waters scarcely whispered as they laved the overhanging rocks. Throughout the woodland reigned a breathless silence.

The man upon the cliff suddenly sprang to his feet. Running up to a large rock which lay at the south entrance of the niche, he grasped its rugged face and leaned forward as one intently listening.

Presently from out the weird silence of the valley came the musical bay of a hound!

How indescribably beautiful is this sound where cliff echoes to cliff and the very crags take up the notes and bear them on. Sweet as the voice of a bugle came the notes from some mysterious point, melting along the mountain sides. Softly the vast empty space seemed to drink in with famished lips that melody so strange; where sound seemed to change the face of

nature—so habituated was the spot to the solemn silence of the mountain solitude. Again came forth that long, mellifluous reverberation; slowly creeping up the valley till it spent itself in receding waves from off the slanting heights then died away into silence more profound because of the strange awakening.

The being upon the cliff came forward, stretched forth his neck, leaned desperately over the giddy height till it would seem he must be precipitated from the verge. He was looking steadily up the valley.

Long he stood there in silence, awaiting perchance the next reverberation which would discover to him the object. But no sound broke the quiet. More the phantom of a dream had it been, than a living utterance. For a moment aroused, nature again sank back into that calm which seemed her very genius. From their dens for a moment peeped the mountain foxes, muttered a low growl and again slunk back. Aloft the eagle continued his flight.

After some more slightly perceptible moves, the man upon the cliff adjusted himself in a leaning posture beside the rock which supported his body. He was fixed in attention. For the first time did this stranger seem to have one over-powering thought! Riveted to the spot as though by some apparition which called forth his uttermost faculties, he remained to all appearances gazing upon a single object far away.

At the south entrance to the niche in which he stood there lay a large rock, covered on its top with small bunches of grass and a few creeping vines; pro-

tecting the entrance like the out-works of a fortress. It was against this he was leaning. There was another deep bay. Suddenly, and at this apparent warning, he leaped upon this natural parapet and stood for an instant, his full form clearly defined in the sun; then quickly descending upon the sloping side of the mountain, he hastily picked up an armful of stones and with rapid retreat again disappeared within the niche. Twice he repeated this strange movement, and at last disappeared completely.

And now soon followed a scene, whose frightful and strange details, it is perhaps impossible in words to faithfully reveal. The entire valley at once in redoubled resonation, awakened, as at single designs to the furious accent of the hound! Far up the valley, where the stream lost itself in the edge of the forest, where it seemed to dive in between abutting hills, was seen a chorus of hounds swiftly emerging from out the woodland. Their heads down; their noses threading the way over the fast receding earth; they seemed rather following a hot trail than in pursuit of anything visible.

For a long time lost to view and hid within the deep recesses of the niche, the man upon the cliff was finally seen to carefully thrust out his head from behind the rocky wall. It now became apparent that this oncoming pack, with its multiplied echoes, which now resounded from every cliff, bore close relation to this man's mysterious presence.

By times retracing their steps to pick up the lost trail; bounding madly at intervals into the air; one

hound awakening the hollowness of nature with incessant peals, rich, yet thrilling, and at times positively startling the blood with that indescribable cadence which carries with it the presence of the dreadful, on came that pack of beasts made doubly furious by the fresh scent from the hot trail over which they sped like swallows. Lost for a moment within the copses, suddenly they would plunge into view from three several points; each a living tempest of animal instinct! Skirting around a hill they appeared with a leap at the crest, from which they sped, swiftly disappearing within the neighboring depressions again.

Soon the enemy were multiplied! if enemy they were. From out the wood, came forth on swift gallop, two mounted men. They rushed impetuously upon a height, which commanded the valley. One pulled forth a glass and surveyed the field.

In a moment they had located the dogs. Again putting spurs to their panting steeds, and darting down the incline they were lost to view.

The picture momentarily became more interesting. As the manifestations in the valley became more threatening the being upon the cliff hugged more closely to the sheltering rocks. By times he took a hasty glance at the animals, who were now making their intentions less questionable as they followed the path up which ere the break of day the man had ascended into his hiding. The dogs were bloodhounds —and he, a slave! The question was solved.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ENCOUNTER.

THIS interesting cliff-man was a type of those intensely black Africans, whose powerful warlike tribes have immortalized their race with deeds of savage valor upon the African hills—the monarchs of that mysterious continent. This individual himself was of massive size and extraordinary strength. His clothing consisted of a loose, cotton shirt, an old slouch hat, heavy shoes of the kind usually worn by slaves, and lastly a thin pair of pants which were fastened at the waist by a girdle of leather. In his pocket he carried a rudely fashioned but vicious instrument—a long, clasp-knife.

The *most* remarkable feature of his apparel, however, consisted of something entwined about his waist, like the several coils of a serpent. One end of this gearing came up under his arm and was made fast to an iron collar which encircled his massive neck.

On one side of this frightful metal band there was a rude but interesting inscription. It read: "Vulcan, chattle-slave of Charles Vanderg, Vicksburg, Miss." The name "Vulcan" had been freshly stamped. The remainder of the inscription was old, plainly indicating that this collar was only a sample among others of its kind belonging to a "speculator." There were three things which from the first moment united to make the approaching encounter tragic.

First—If this giant were ever taken alive there was gained a reward of $800. If dead $300. Second—The previous history of this black man revealed the unpleasant fact that he possessed no fear of the results of resistance. Third—His present adversaries themselves were desperate men, as well as professionals. Besides, the attack was led by blood-hounds.

Blood-hounds carefully trained seldom give utterance to their frenzy, but with studied silence and the haste of the catapult they come upon their prey. Two of those now approaching were of that species. But along with them there was one less skilled, and his unrestrained echoes each time his frenzied instinct smelt the hot trail announced the presence of that animal fury before which the bravest slave had cause to tremble.

How dismal, how terrible, how unutterably fearful as we recall the instinct of those man-hunting beasts, were those canine echos! The slave upon the cliff crouched low, until an unaccustomed eye could not have detected the slightest token of his presence. Who can portray the heart beats, the fierce and almost savage expectancy; the clinched teeth and fixed eyes, the statue of ebony into which desperation had magically changed this slave as he crouched there with eyes riveted upon the fast approaching beasts.

There was foam in their red mouths and upon their sides. For a moment they loose the trail. Running out upon a shelving rock they give utterance to the most indescribable howl, filled at once with all the savageness of their instinct and the madness of disap-

pointment. The bushes and tangled briers thwart them. They are enfuriated! They loiter upon the slopes, look back over the valley and howl with enkindled rage. Again their eyes turn to the yet unscaled rocky barriers. They dash upon the stones, or stop for an instant, panting with that fierce excitement into which only the beast can be transported. Surveying from their height, their masters who were hitching their horses below, they gave vent to uneasy savage whines.

The slave upon the cliff has hidden within the ledge. Can it be that he is safe? God pity him if he must encounter that brindle hound wearing the collar with the steel spines, or the black, whose lips are now drewling bloody foam.

He has now completely hidden himself within the niche. The little vines that crown the protecting parapet move gently in the morning air. Silent and impressive arises the skull-like features of the frowning cliff; frightful is the scene in its desperate portent. The horses once secured, the persurers began the long ascent, cursing as at times they fall upon the acute inclines or trip upon the stones. At intervals is heard their voices far down the mountain, yet more than a thousand feet away, inciting the beasts with oaths. On, sped the hounds, the prey is nigh. Already they feast their gloating instinct with the nearness of the victim.

Finally, after many desperate leaps and recoils, the black hound gains the top, and with an assured bound lights squarely upon the rocky parapet. For

an instant he surveys the niche. His large, leonine body is clearly defined.

But his mission had ended. A stone, as if from the string of a catapult, came from out the recess of the cliff and the beast fell back limp among the rocks. Unchecked by this result, the hound, whose terrible throat had for the past ten minutes converted the solitude into a dismal hell, sprang upon the spot from whence his predecessor had fallen; tarried but for an instant and then leaped into the arena.

It was plain the slave was in hiding at this moment, for the hound ran swiftly out upon the verge of the cliff; lifted high his head, giving the most passionate and enraged howl, accentuated with a cadence more diabolical than seldom springs from the unrestrained savagery of beasts. Instantly a stone came rushing through the air with fearful velocity, but misguided in its flight. The dog escapes and the stone bounds from the ledge to the great rocks at the base of the cliff, thence disappears with a crash throngh the upward thrust limbs of the pine below.

Maddened by the fruitless menace, and doubly assured by the sight of the prey, the hound sprang forth upon the body of the black. Then came the sound of strife between brute and man from off that giddy height. From out the niche was heard a sound at once strange and terrible. It was not human, and yet it was. Far reaching and indescribable that maddened cadence sprang from out the recess like an arrow of fire into the sky. It was the madness of hell in a single note. With a despairing yell the negro

had grappled with his foe! The low howl of the hound was muffled by the intervening rocks, and all sank back into painful silence. From these mysterious tokens the tragedy—had it not already ended—could not have been divined. Undoubtedly the clasp-knife was doing its deadly work. But the great brindle beast, he with the iron collar and spines, was not slow to the rescue. With a bound he cleared the stony outwork and alighted squarely upon his feet. He ran out upon the verge of the cliff, sniffing the air—raised his terrible head, emitting a low, savage whine.

Upon his brindle sides lay great, white blotches of foam. He had stood but an instant when a boulder glanced from his side, and spent its flight in harmless rattle far below among the limbs of the pine. It was an extreme moment!

Instantly the beast lowered himself in the attitude of the tiger about to spring; lashed his tail from side to side as an angry cat, and with a crackling roar sprang through the air! Both men had now appeared at once upon the rocks to the south, over which the hounds had one by one made their entrance. One of them cried aloud in words and oaths inarticulate; and placing his hand upon the rock leaped down into the arena. There was no articulate language necessary. Each knew well the part he was to play in this tragic pantomime—and from first to last played it well. The brindle hound had fastened his fangs in the flesh of the slave's arm, and with frightful jerks had dragged him into sight. The eyes of the frenzied negro had become marvel-

ously large and gleaming. His black face had been transformed into the likeness of an enraged tiger. The eyebrows, drawn together, produced several deep, long indentures, radiating upward across the forehead, not unlike a cluster of poisoned javelins used by his dark savage race, in the deep forests of Africa. His lips were drawn into two hideous loops, displaying two rows of sharp ivory teeth. For a moment man and beast struggled upon the brink. The black stooped, lifted what appeared to be a pike, raised it high, and with a quick thrust planted it between the flaming jaws of the dog, burying it deep into the lungs. With rage and pain, accentuated by the most unearthly cries, wild and senseless, the beast lunged from off the height, falling upon the great stone far below.

Instantly the black and his human adversaries met near the verge of the cliff. The black was struck with a blunt instrument; perhaps the butt of a revolver. Dazed by the blow he reeled, but recovering came forward and clinched his adversary. And then ensued a struggle more pronounced, more frightful in its details and more appalling in its results than it is possible in feeble words to relate. In fact the present horror of the encounter is quite sufficiently sickening to the unaided imagination; located as it was upon such a precipice, doomed from the first to be a fight until death—barricaded as they were from all possible escape from that horrible niche now smoking with blood, and over whose dizzy brink the most alarming and hideous of deaths awaited the

victim, far, far below among the ledges, or upon the great bolder which lay grimly at the base.

Since the death of the last hound who in fatal madness had sprang from off the cliff with the pike still reeking within his lungs, the noise had subsided to a sharp scuffle of feet, mingled with an occasional oath muttered low and deep between clinched teeth. This encounter was taking place upon the very verge of the cliff, but with mutual fear the struggling beings drew away until they disappeared within the niche.

One of the whites who as yet had not clinched with the negro, had been persuing his vantage, seeking a chance to fire into the unprotected body of the black. Finally there was a sharp report, followed by a puff of smoke, and the terrible cliff again resumed tranquility, this time made doubly solemn by the awful silence which for a few moments ensued.

Had the deed been done? Had the curtain dropped upon the final act? Aloft soared on even pinions the great vulture—his eye at that moment feasting upon the ghastly bodies, or gloating over the blood-stained rocks. Below, upon the brown face of the ledge, a mountain animal, perhaps a fox, aroused by the sound of the strife, had crept out and sat in the sun keenly listening. Far away through the valley were the frightened horses. They had each broken their straps and now sped in terror from the spot—dashed like a flash into the forest and were lost to sight.

Suddenly again the bald crown of the cliff awakens by the presence of two struggling, human beings.

The third was likely dead! No, not dead; his form is seen reeling along the south wall. He is stealing upon the negro! But it is evident that he is dazed by a stroke which has been received, whilst within the niche, yet does he drag his steps ever closer.

How desperate, how unspeakable! Again they struggle upon the brink. It is the embrace of death! Fingers and teeth are buried in foeman's flesh. Lo, there comes a moment appalling even to the imagination. They grasp for life! By times a body half inclines over that rocky crest. Stones broken from the verge, fall in chunks; down, down, down, beating themselves into fragments upon the projecting ledges. There is a cry upon the air. It springs from human lips—but how utterly beyond the force of human speech to portray! It had within its sharp but quivering cadence the heart-enthralling modulations of the diabolical. Falling, sinking, cleaving and quivering upon the ear. Great God, the battle ends!

Lifted high in air, a human body is suddenly hurled from off the giddy brink. With a downward rush, faster, yet more fast as it nears the fleeting ledges; completing two revolutions in its mad plunge; Down, down! it hurries—falls at last prone upon the great rock at the base of the cliff and rolls thence slowly, limp and dead, into the branches of the pine, where it makes its final and lasting lodgment. It is the body of one of the whites. The slave is yet alive!

During the encounter so feebly herein told, the

long rope or queer bodily gearing, which at first was entwined about the body of the black, had been slowly uncoiling, and now swung loose in the wind.

Hark! It rattles upon the stones as it falls about his feet. God pity him—it is a chain! It is fastened at his neck. It is riveted to the iron collar! See! He grasps it and whirls it on high! Down falls the whistling links, each clinging to its neighbor—welded by centrifugal force into a rod of iron. Swiftly, does it cleave the air, and with a thud, buries itself in the skull of the last surviving foe.

The stricken white—his cranium cut to the brain—falls. The head drops back, the mouth opens, the eyes roll and cast upon the black their ghastly visions of death. The battle has ended.

Limp, trembling, panting, faint from loss of blood, the black leaned for support against the north wall of the niche. Upon his heaving chest his head droops, his jaws fall apart and the tongue protrudes; his quivering nerves emptied of their last vital atom. At this moment, had a fly rested in his great palm, he could not have crushed it. From his broad hairy chest, issued a volume of steam. From off his brow and neck exuded a flood of sweat. See! The giant knees tremble; he faints; he falls prone upon the flat top of the cliff; limp he falls, silent upon the stony floor.

CHAPTER XVII.

VULCAN MEETS MAURICE SEVERGN.

NOT far from the city of Cincinnati, and just three days after the tragedy in the mountains, a young man was lying under the sheltering umbrage of a great elm which stood above a ledge of trap-rock overhanging the Ohio river. In the west sank the evening sun deeply impurpled with his five o'clock robe of molten gold, through which came raining arrows of light, transmuting hill and vale to orange-gray and emerald. In the river plowed lazily a side-wheel steamer, the only watercraft in sight. It had passed the ledge upon which lay our new acquaintance.

Maurice Severgn was an intellectual voluptuary, for he was a student, and the life of the student is but the prolongation of intellectual voluptuousness. Life knows no bliss until it has tasted of this, the most heavenly of earthly joys. As the great western clouds burst forth in their unearthly glow whilst behind them sank the sun in that awful magnificence of his—best seen at the evening hour; as slowly lengthened the shadows from the hills, darkling their sleepy forms upon the river, still tarried Maurice Severgn, whilst in his mind sped forth those reveries which fill the wakeful hours of youth with the prophetic starlight of genius. He had known deep suffering, for in his youth he had tasted of the very dregs of sorrow—we should say in his childhood—for he was yet young.

He had been taught stern practicability, and yet was he a dreamer in the most unequivocal sense of that phrase.

The great men of earth, those whose intellects have burst upon the common darkness of life with the incandescence of genius, all spent a youth within the perfumed shades of revery, beneath the soul moulding forces of dreamland. Heaven herself hath parted her magic curtains to such as these.

Seven years within the vast solitudes of the Hymalayas, where naught reigned but the silence of nature broken at long intervals by the unearthly roar of the sea of ice bursting from its glacial home, the o'er canoping stars and the undulating map of nature his daily communicants, a cave his home, dwelt Buddah. From the caves of Asia Minor came forth Mohammed, the crusher of idols and the builder of a new faith which however fallacious, hath guided the destiny of untold millions for these thousand years. If but the obscure life of the Immortal Carpenter—him whose light shall never fade—if but half of those long hours of his, clouded with the world's woe, broken alternately by the unearthly splendor of revelation—those heavenly dreams of Christ could be known, what transcendent flights of mind, mapping the course of genius through these mundane clouds as with blazing arrows piercing the awful depths, would illumine the dark unknown!

Such has been genius from the beginning of time. Inspiration awakens the soule to lasting deeds where solely is found revery and solitude. For revery is the

ladder of the mind, climbing out into space, and solitude its ether.

If to love solitude, to seek seclusion, to be the adorer of the great who have left records of their fame on the tablets of history; if to live in a perpetual revery of facts of great historic significance, of scientific precision, of philosophic magnitude; if to deal with the known with sage-like insight, and with the unknown with far-reaching analysis; if to be forever surrounded by that weird atmosphere, transcendental, is the life of the dreamer, then were the days of Maurice Severgn the veritable, star-jemmed zenith of dream land.

Had he been poor he would have been an Oliver Goldsmith, aloft in some pauper's garret, reading in the dull shades the philosophies of man, and from his humble tenement would he have projected into space his silvery dreams of heaven and earth. But by a sort of miraculous casting on, a fact which served much to make of him a fatalist through life, he was rich; and those long reveries which otherwise might have been choked by the gloom of a garret were now lifted into the careless sunlight on unfettered wings. A day within the the leafy forest, or upon the emerald hills meant not to him the castigation which the poor pay for luxury. Though by no means did affluence make a slave of him, weighing down the spirit with the opium of surfeited pleasure. Whole days did he wander o'er the Kentucky hills, and at night returned on aching feet—upon his back the booty of a crusade in Geology, or with mind

filled with that intellectual repast gathered from the picture writings of nature. Oft times at dusk, slowly moving homeward had he been seen wending his way in the lonely shadows of approaching night; and the unsophisticated traveler lending him a seat in his wagon, oft found the stupid murk of his every-dayness suddenly lighted with that strange twilight which comes o'er us in the presence of him who seems sainted by the mysteries. For there are none of us so dull but that our souls are tuned in unison with those pulse beats of nature, which causeth alike the glinting beams of Sirius, the Atlantic billow and the silently creeping blood in the vein of the rose.

Severgn was a profound student of books. Likewise had he been an observer, for he had visited many lands, and for one of his years he had traveled much. Therefore were the images which came to his mind from out the written page heightened and made vivid by experience—that only school which can raise into bass-relief the pictures of the brain.

Severgn had been seated upon the cliff for perhaps an hour. And now the sun from a bank of flaming red was bidding farewell to the closing day. Church spires and other prominent structures stood clearly defined on the western sky.

Some moments since, Severgn had observed a man on the opposite shore come down to the water's edge. Directly the man leaped into the water and began the heroic task of swimming the broad river. This task he accomplished in a remarkably short space of time.

Being unconscious of anyone's presence in this

wild and lonly place, after sometime, the swimmer slowly made his way to the top of the cliff. He had approached within a few rods of Severgn when he suddenly halted. Before Severgn stood the giant form of Vulcan. The black did not offer to hide the chain and iron collar which was still fastened to him. He stood silently looking upon Severgn with a fierce unmistakable determination to make himself master of this most troublesome and unexpected situation at any odds. After a moment Severgn spoke. "No explanation, sir, is necessary. You are a fugitive. It is now evening time. You are undoubtedly hungry and tired. You are several hundred miles from Canada—follow me."

CHAPTER XVIII.

ROSETTA THE TROUBADOUR.

THE dreams of Severgn, to which we have before slightly alluded, were, however, mostly generated in the solitude of his vast library, or under the kindly foliage of the great trees which graced the sward; which, like a carpet of green velvet, spacious, luxurious, soft and sweetly scented lay outspread before the flower-clad peristyle of the great house in which he lived.

Here among the scented blossoms of rare exotics, beneath the soul-moulding witchery of the silent shades, his fancies melted into the weird lights of a psychic landscape, transmuting the leaden touch of

realism into the enchanted ether of ideality. Here perused he those strange philosophies which through the paths of the abstruse lead the mind into the spiritual dells of the unearthly; which like fairy tales, after subduing by witchcraft, induce the hero from out the shadow of the substantial into the valley ringing with the laugh of elf and nymph. For more keen was the brain of Severgn for the wonders of science, than is the pulsing heart of a child for the rapture of a nursery tale.

One day whilst buried in the abstruse philosophy of Schopenhauer, a German writer, little known in this day, but who at that period was reaping bright laurels in his native land, Severgn had been reclining in the shade of a poplar whilst following with ravished attention "The Laws of Will Bursting Into Life," of "Desires, Unconquerable, the Fruit of all Human Evil," and other such dissertations by that strange old cynic, when suddenly, not far away broke forth the melody of an Italian harp, accompanied by a female voice of the most ravishing sweetness. He closed his book, came up into the portico and sat down. Unnoticed, or whilst he was within the rugged crags of those wild thoughts of the German philosopher, a couple of troubadores had entered the gate and coming up the gravel walk they were now pouring forth the melody of their wandering souls beneath the vines of the old scent-laden portico.

At length the music ceased, the great carved doors of the house opened, and the gay liveried form of a mulatto appeared and dropped a coin in the extended

hat of a small Italian boy. "Take them into the house, Belshazzar, seat them and call mother," commanded Severgn.

The being from whose lips had flowed the song was a girl, but not an Italian, though such did her garb indicate. She was at least fourteen, perhaps older. Her long dark auburn hair hung in pretty waves at her back. A liberty cap made of a scarlet material, neatly decorated with small metal stars and a thin gold tassel was secured to her head by means of a small metal cincture from which dangled a row of fanciful pendants. Her lithe graceful body was clothed in a troubadour's costume, consisting of a loose white blouse of black material also decorated with tiny metal stars and outlined with a fancy gilt braid. The skirt was red and ornamented about two inches from the bottom with several rows of gilt. This skirt being made short enough to escape the dust, it innocently permitted the display of a bit of fancy hose and two small black slippers which were clasped to the feet with tiny gilt buckles. Her body, face, hands and arms were outlined with a classic exactness of harmony and health. She sang with a grace which at once reminded the observer of the song bird, whilst upon her cheeks went and came a ruddy tinge, expressive of her vocaled emotions. The brow shone white beneath the scarlet turban, though the pear-shaped chin was browned far down the throat by the sun.

Severgn knew a smattering of Italian, and in the roundelay and the tune to which it was woven his mind was carried back into a past sweetened by the

memory of the enchanted glades of Italy. He had more than once tossed a coin for the singing of this same song. Once had he heard it in Florence.

When the musicians had gone, he called to the slave and questioned him concerning them.

"Belshazzar," inquired Severgn, "give me some account of the musicians who have just left the gate."

"Master—"

"Stop!" exclaimed Severgn, "call me Maurice. He who delights in Mendelssohn and has attempted the philosophy of Hegel should master no other human being."

The slave, so grooved in the conventional ways of the time in all matters pertaining to the status of his race, felt less at home in the extreme liberty thrust upon him by his present master than under the ban in which his former life had been cursed. And although he had served Severgn for several years as body servant yet did he lapse irresistably by times into the old ways in which he had been taught to go.

"They serve Cammillo, the fruit vender, he who keeps a stand upon the corner across from the State bank," responded the slave.

"Is that all you have?" asked Severgn.

At the instance of being further importuned on the subject for which Belshazzar deemed his master placed but a casual curiosity, but for which he found him strangely filled with an unsatisfied thirst, he revealed a collection of facts from which after more years had come about and Severgn had reached mature manhood,

the following history was woven; in whose woof after many pages have been traveled will be plainly seen the fatal chain, which finally fell about the young philosopher whose nature upon the suface would seem steel proof against such possible fate.

The girl's youthfulness and Severgn's present state of mind made it now impossible for him to look upon her extraordinary combination of vivacity, health, beauty, mind, with other than that admiration with which he regarded the rare plumage of a wild bird or the beauty of one of his exotic flowers. Entirely different was it with the girl herself. The magnificence of Severgn's home awed her, and his tall form and friendly words impressed her till her voice *quivered.*

"Take these flowers, little girl," remarked Madam Severgn with tears in her eyes. "My baby girl, if God had not taken her from me, would have been about your age." Gratitude is sometimes ingulfed in wonderment. The troubadour's bosom heaved, her heart throbbed and her eyes dampened, but she was silent. For several succeeding days she would meditate—"Some time in my past life I have seen Madam Severgn. But where—where?" This fact rather more firmly fastened within her heart the emotion which Maurice himself had awakened.

Avert we then to the central issue of the forthcoming chapter; to the songster and her keep; to Rosetta, whose fame had spread throughout all the land wherein she had traveled.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE PADRONE.

Across that fetid slough, the Rhine, by which name the old canal is known in satirical commemoration of its silvery namesake, was located the home of Camillo, an Italian. From out the racked tenements, that realm of squalid Cincinnati where the air was fetid with the fumes of stale beer, where at that period moved that motley crew of poorest foreigners with their big dirty families, the pauper in his garret, the rag-picker in his den, the black-leg in his haunt, the scavanger with his stench, the peddler with his pack, the rum bloat with his mug, and the Italian with his pannier of small wares; where the air was by times filled with curses and forever a din of clashing beer glasses and the song of lewd women; from this place came the nymph-like form of Rosetta—she with the brown lustrous eye and the dark auburn hair—Rosetta the troubadour, with a voice like the almost fabulous notes of the Nightingale. As she came from out those abodes where crept forever the social shadow of the great city, strange and enchanting seemed her plumage; for Camillo possessed great art and knew how to ensnare a public with his song bird. Unique and marvelous was she when she posed for those songs which hushed the street to a calm and brought the merchant from out his shop.

Camillo had come, in the summer. He had

taken his abode in this locality, although it was told about with a vein of assurance that the old Italian—he the fierce Camillo, around whose step seemed to stalk the shadow of dark deeds, from out whose flaming eyes shot an unremitting fire, Camillo the padrone, was rich. And possibly the argus eyed public were not far wrong, for up and down earth's rugged pathway had this swarthy one traveled, and over the uneven surface of life had he wandered for many years.

He was now advanced into the vale of life some fifty or more years. In his prime he had been tall and sinewy, and perhaps of remarkable strength, but he was now slightly bent, yet by no means senile in his appearance. However, the deep furrows in his swarthy face indicated the presence of approaching age; and of his former visage much was obliterated. The lines of his face were those of indefinite age, and the hieroglyphics of a dubious past. They defied analysis, and yet did they speak of something deeply written—something akin to suffering, the heart and perhaps sin. The cheeks sunken and dark were covered with a thick growth of stubble, originally black but now sprinkled with short, stiff stubs of gray. The lips were thin and firm, the mouth large, the nose aquiline. Above this psychic landscape, so filled with mystery, was chiseled a brow, lofty for that of an Italian but fringed at its base with coarse, jutting eyebrows, obliquely set, denoting cunning as well as cruelty—the entire field lighted by times with the flash of two small eyes deeply set in the dark recesses of the face.

Camillo was one of earth's unfortunates, one of her foot-sore journeymen. Nearly all climes under the sun had known his wanderings. In his youth he had known the flame of high ambition; but a curse came upon him. Interfering with the affairs of state, he fell a victim to a terrible sentence, and then fled his native land. From that day forth the chain of fate being sundered he became a mendicant. He might have been a political leader, perhaps a statesman. Leaving Italy, he being but a youth and unlearned in devious ways of earth—his unguided ambition led him to the mines of Brazil. Poor blighted creature! He fell lower. He became a slave. Having been convicted of robbery he was sentenced for ten years to penal servitude in the mines, those splendid orifices of earth which his mind had peopled with treasure, gold and gems, some day to be his, but now gone forever. Escaping he wandered to the rebellious fields of Mexico, and enlisting under the banner of an adventurer, he served five years as a mercenary—bared his breast to the muzzle of muskets, and steeped himself in carnage. The strife over and his leader beheaded, he became one among a hundred picked men; launched a brigantine under the very eyes of Vera Cruz; sailed to Central America, where he helped to found the only monarchy which up to late years maintained in the new world. Here he fell into disgrace, returned to Mexico, and after a short time came to New Orleans.

It was at this old French city that his fortune suddenly brightened; and from the day of his landing

he prospered as the world goes, in the accumulation of gold, a small quantity of which he had laid up and secreted for a cold day. For it was in this city that he became the possessor of the enchantress, Rosetta.

The relationship between Camillo and the girl were not known, and in vain did a curious public pry into the affairs of the old padrone, for not one bit nearer did they steal upon the mystery which fell about him and his beautiful protege.

Rosetta was an orphan; that was certain, for she could not be the child of Camillo. Some words had been spoken and they had been overheard. Rosetta had been known to weep—and do not people in sorrow open uncommonly wide the chambers of the heart? So thought Mrs. Grimes, who did out washing on the neighboring balcony, and Mrs. Cluben, she who sold inferior beer across the way in the basement. Mystery cannot live undisturbed. Curiosity is the most intense of human passions. It projects the mind into the unknown and brings forth monstrous shapes; and it names them and sets them afloat. Gossip contains within itself the function of self-propagation. Thus in time did the story of Rosetta, awakened in the brain of an old woman by a mug of beer, finally reach the aristocratic, where it was gilded and twisted and enlarged. And finally two pretty dames sat musing in a parlor dedicated to social chaff, and one of them said in all the candor of unsophisticated faith, whilst her great beautiful eyes flashed sweetly upon her listning companion: "The child is an orphan. She is not the child of the Italian. They came from the South.

Some say she was found in the streets—the cast-off child of an unfortunate mother; others vow Camillo knows more of her history than he dare tell. They have wandered long and the child has visited all the cities of the South attainable by car or boat. Camillo is very cruel by times, yet again is it said—as though stung by conscience—he lavishes upon her the most uncommon indulgence. From the latter it is concluded, and perhaps wisely, that Rosetta sprang from great and wealthy parents; that in her babyhood she had been the victim of a plot; that she had been abducted."

But certain it was that Rosetta was a valuable possession; a wonder in beauty and yet a sphynx upon whom the public could fix all imaginable dreams. And as people passed the booth of Camillo, where he sat watching over his fruit, often did they steal inquiring glances upon him, vainly endeavoring to decipher the strange psychic characters which were engraven upon that embronzed skin. But looking upon his soul through those flashing optical windows, whilst discerning the interior fire they were not aware of his luckless past which now slumbered in the molten cynicism of his memory. He hated mankind. In him the flame of youth, inspired by wild dreams, had been suffocated by the illest fortune; and deep in his heart the embers of hate lay glowing.

From out a full round head, in which there lurked a brain of no common power, sprang a mat of dark shaggy hair; short and sprinkled with a few sprouts of gray. Two gold hoops, small but shining, gleamed

in his ears, bringing into fierce contrast the thick wrinkled neck, the cuticle of which had long since turned to a prickly brown under the effort of incessant suns. Upon the little finger of his left hand he wore a plain gold ring. It had accompanied him through life. Perhaps within its secret interior it bore initials, awakening by times like magic, the gleam of a passing memory; connecting that life of his along its devious and sin-darkened course, like a thread of silver woven in sombre cloth.

Such was the keeper of Rosetta. Into the hands of this human wreck she had fallen; Rosetta the troubadour, a bird of Paradise with the voice of the Nightingale.

In her, padre Camillo saw a possible fortune; and he exclaimed: Her voice shall serve me! I have been beaten by mankind; I have been their horse, their slave. I have fought in their wars; I have dug in their mines; but the metal was theirs and the conquests I helped make built not kingdoms for me. I have been cheated and robbed. I have starved and wandered and starved. The world owes me redress. Fortune has favored me now, and I shall be no laggard in the acceptance of her alm. If the child has voice and music I shall attach that to her beauty; it shall bring me thrift. Under every window and before every door shall she sing, till the ungenerous globe shall again be traveled over by my suffering and unpaid feet. I shall regain the fortune men have long kept from me.

Under the ban of such decree began the career of

Rosetta. Her struggles like the bird in the snare were vain. The cords bound her and they were invincible. Thus they started forth armed with a great harp—Camillo to conquor the world, to regain the honors of the battle once lost; Rosetta to chase those gilded visions of life, which vanish at our touch as melteth the golden clouds of morn, whilst swiftly climbs the sun of youth into the meridian of years. After a long and painful journey through the land of the slave, a vivid picture of which forever remained in the brain of the child, thrilling accounts of which in after years she could relate by the hour, the two arrived in St. Louis. Here Camillo put Rosetta under the tutorage of a French lady, who made a profession of teaching children for the minstrelsy.

Despite those tearful reveries which by times would flit across her young mind, the infant, so sweetly named Rosetta, grew apace under the care of her instructor, and improved rapidly upon the few rudiments previously taught her by Camillo. Would she ever again see her father? she would inquire; and Camillo would repeat the oft told story that he had gone out at sea; that he would be gone many days; that he would some day return and bring her presents. Thus was her guileless youth conjured back into equipoise and hope. Gradually that picture which for years had dwelt in her mind, began to fade under the insidious drug of absence and the ever recurring newness of her budding life, until it would seem to exultant Camillo that her memory had succumbed; for she ceased to revert to these things of her more primitive childhood.

And now began that roaming life only known to the troubadour. For ten years they wandered, visiting all those cities washed by the Mississippi, going some times far inland, looking for a time on great fields of cotton, stopping for a few days at town or village—the charms of Rosetta always winning many a silver piece from admiring throngs. Once they had come as far north as Pennsylvania, but the frosts of winter threatening them, back again far into the interior of Florida they retreated.

CHAPTER XX.

CASSI BIANCO.

IT was after these many years of travel, and Camillo one day finding himself getting old and slightly broken on the wheel of life whose revolutions had somewhat blurred his mind and shattered his frame, that the two, the old padre and his little slave, touched in their aimless wanderings the great hills which like bastions of war surround the old city of the Ohio Valley.

It was a clear and beautiful day. A cloudless sky o'er canoping a smokeless city. East, west, north and south, were rolled back, deep and beyond the vision, those silent dun forms which like smoke from Hecla's crater doom the city of the valley to her life of many gloomy days. As Camillo looked abroad over the city from the great airy height where he stood, he lifted his harp from his broad shoulders and breathed deep and long the sweet pure air of June.

To the south lay the opposing heights of the Kentucky shore, washed by the broad, silent waters of the Ohio river which stole in and out through the imposing hills. Below him in the valley nestled the busy urban life of two hundred thousand people; the streets sharply defined, the steeples of churches and towers of factories jutting forth; now and then the notes of a bell from some sacred tower, for it was Sunday and thousands were then at prayer. In the river Camillo plainly could discern boats with their black stacks thrown down and at rest.

There was a buoyancy and a strange intoxication in the scene. He filled full his lungs with the pure atmosphere as it swept the green hills and stole upon him with its scent-laden wings. A splendid sun was sinking in the west. He listened and heard the low murmur of an organ in some sacred edifice. Calling Rosetta he addressed her in Italian, pointing out with his long, sweeping hand the features of the city most distinctly appealing to him. After a time, seating himself upon the ground, he unbuckled from his body a great leathern belt or girdle. Rosetta sat down beside him. And Camillo taking his grim old hat from off his head, half filled it with the gold and silver coins, which with a rush came from the mouth of the uplifted girdle.

Again he arose and looked on all sides. Seeing no one he sat down, and one by one counted the precious treasure, replacing it in the eager mouth of the girdle. One by one disappeared the coins, with a chink and a ring rushing back into their dark home. Camillo

kept count in Italian, Rosetta spake in English, and once said "five hundred" in French. Again replacing the belt about his loins and swinging the great harp upon his back, Camillo shot forth his long neck, as is the habit of the harp-bearer, and took steps down the steep incline. Rosetta followed close by him, casually twanging at intervals her battered violin whose notes laughed in the spring air like the struggling voice of a child.

For Camillo, the life of the wanderer had ended. For Rosetta, a great day was fast approaching.

The two, equally footsore from many a weary march, took habitation in a squalid settlement of that most inglorious part of the city designated as "across the Rhine." Around them was that crazy patchwork of people picked from all nations and all climes; those indefinable ones of the populous cities, who forgetting all bias which previously distinguish them, social, religious or national, huddle together for mutual condolence and comfort, whilst about them, uprising from the social sea of misery and dearth falls the everlasting surge of fortune in its mottled colorings of poverty, sin and death. Camillo's anchorage at this point was quite natural. For albeit, he had a girdle well filled with gold, yet had he become from his immense wanderings one of earths prolataire. He who in youth bore that spark of genius which might have mounted into statesmanship; he whose flame and ardor of youthful purpose had put his nervy hand into the sword-hilt and who had gone forth to build kingdoms; he who would have built States or

directed a government, had sunken to the mere lees of life.

Yet did he keep a few lingering ambitions alive. He hoped some day to return to Italy rich. In his long absence, party leaders had died and government had changed. The tyranny which had withered him and had smote his youthful fires was itself now, a disease-eaten political dogma. He had nothing to fear from this score. Social theories arise and die with the age. Likewise was this becoming the fate of that social system which his youthful hands, under the banner of Garibaldi, had so vainly thrust forth to throttle at Genoa in 1834. But with wisdom in his present state, and stoicism for his fate, he muttered to himself when above him seemed to thicken the clouds—"Does not Garibaldi, himself now make and vend candles for a living in an obscure corner of the globe?"

[Garibaldi was then manufacturing candles on Staten Island, N. Y.]

Camillo was not long in his new home till he conceived a desire for entering into business on an enlarged scale. About him he saw many idle little "vags" of his own nationality, many of whom were clogs to the family weal, to which, by nature, they were attached. They were children of the extremely poor—that class of Italians who live in shambles, rookeries and hovels; who look out upon the world from their high garrets, the smoky dismal world below them ekeing out a miserable existence, and thriving in their way by begging, pilfering, rag-picking, paper-gathering, petty theft and the vending of fruits, matches and light trinkets.

Seeing this, Camillo conceived a plan. These little "vags," these half-starved infant paupers he would unite under a single head, and thus their skill and energy should be his gain. An army of pigmies headed by a Goliath! The more the idea was weighed the more feasible became the outlook. But first of all he would open a fruit-booth upon a certain corner, which to his amazement had long stood idle and unoccupied.

It was then summer. July with her scorching suns was upon the city. Camillo set about, putting his pet project into effect, and by the middle of the month the little booth had sunken its invisible roots into the pavement; and into the great brick wall against which it grew it had clinched like the subtle hand of the ivy. There it stood, thriving, growing, smiling, and running over with its jolly freight of nuts, candies and fruits, all assorted and glowing in irresistible freshness. It had come to stay. The endless throng, which, from early morn to midnight passed the spot would be juggled by the sweet scent from off those apples, figs, bananas, grapes, oranges, lemons and pineapples; and the little Arabs who roam the streets, would be entranced by the flash of the inviting candies. So mused Camillo, and the dream was true. The first jet of steam had scarcely leaped from out the whistle of his peanut-roaster when a red-faced lad of his own nationality, forgetting all propriety and becoming at one leap the genuine American gammon, cried in a tone of provocation, "Look at the Dago!"

The severe eyes of Camillo glanced from under their tufted canopies and the fixed cynicism of his vis-

age darkened. But seeing at that moment the end of a violin projecting from under the boy's tatters, and noticing the well rosined bow which was twirled about, marking as with a baton the waves of peculiarly satirical mirth with which the boy had colored his salutation, Camillo's face slightly relaxed and he hailed him in Italian. The boy came forward with all the nonchalance of the inimitable gammon.

"Hidalgo!" began the Arab, "what are you good for? I have been watching this new development and I'se going to be the first of em that sets it a goin'." And placing a dime in the crusty hand which was slightly trembling at the propitiousness of the act, the Arab gave his order for a bag of hot nuts, taking the balance in apples.

"I see you are a musician, my bright little man?" inquired Camillo knowingly. His language was in Italian, for in the pair-shaped chin and the fine, large, dark eyes of the Arab he saw the unmistakable tokens of his own race.

"And why does the Dago ask?" responded the Arab.

"Because, I am somewhat of a musician myself."

"But," added the Arab, his eyes twinkling, "you never beat the revelee like me, in the streets of Rome, under the banners of Garibaldi."

"Who are you?" inquired Camillo.

"That's to say who are you?" quoth the precocious youth.

Camillo turned to his fruit and began arranging the oranges.

"My name is Cassi Bianco'" responded the Arab, at the same time munching an apple.

At that name so flippantly spoken, the eyes of the dark faced Camillo alighted with an unmistakable flame of aroused curiosity, and silent wonder.

"Bianco?" responded Camillo after a moment of silence, his piercing brow filled with scrutiny.

"Yes, Cassi Bianco," added the boy negligently stroking his violin, the notes of which giggled and plinked their impudent interludes.

"I am from Genoa," added the boy, looking straight into the face of Camillo.

"Genoa?"

"From Genoa!"

"Your father was a mender of musical instruments?"

"He was until he became a Revolutionist, which led him to the scaffold."

"Bianco!" cried Camillo, unable farther to restrain his pulsing emotions; and in his lithe, sinewy arms he grasped the boy, crushed him to his breast, and lifted him high in the air.

"Bianco! Bianco!" added he, hiding the astonished face in the folds of his loose open shirt, and again binding him with his sinewy arms. "No! no! you do not know old Camillo, the bent-backed old Camillo."

Cassi Bianco was a lad of fourteen. The early death of his mother and the execution of his father by the French and Papists had made him an orphan, and at the age of five he found himself crying in the streets

of Genoa, without a guardian or a home. He was cared for by the Sisters of Mercy till he arrived at his eighth year. Finally the truant youth broke his fetters and lost himself among Garibaldi's gallant soldiery. And when Rome was besieged by that terrible host against which Garibaldi held the ancient city in the face of such overwhelming odds, Bianco repaid his grim preservers with his spirit-stirring drum in the midst of military lead and iron and the roar of musketry.

Under the retreating banners of Garibaldi, when the city had finally fallen into the hands of the besiegers, he made good his escape to Florence where he was captured among many others, tried, but finally liberated in consideration of his youthful age. Following the example of his illustrious leader, he came to America. Infant though he was in years, upon his shoulders was the valor of manhood. He united himself with straying players, and at the period we first meet him had completed a travel over the greater part of the Eastern and Southern States. In blood, he was closely related to Camillo, being the child of Camillo's sister. His father, like Camillo, had been a Revolutionist; but with a more tragic fate than that of the old padrone, he had suffered death for his espoused cause.

When looking upon the uncommon experience of Cassi Bianco we can scarcely think of him as but a child. In spite of our efforts to thrust it back does the picture of manhood obtrude. Yet, when we reflect, that within the city of New York (in the year of 1870)

by authentic statistics, there were ten thousand homeless infants, averaging from five to fifteen in years; all of whom, let it be said to their everlasting glory, won subsistence and managed to survive against their fearful fates, even though as it is recorded, "their shoeless feet oft left bloody tracks upon the ice in the back streets and alleys as they emerged by times to sell their small wares or pilfer a penny's worth of merchandise," when upon this we reflect, the story of Cassi Bianco is not so marvelous.

After a half hour's colloquy, the gist of which is given above, Cassi Bianco and Camillo parted; each to perform his particular business of the day; Bianco promising faithfully to visit Camillo in his garret that same evening. And he kept his word.

CHAPTER XXI.

LE CONSERVATOIRE CAMILLO.—ROSETTA'S LOVE.

TURN we now to the other part of Camillo's newly concocted financial scheme.

That same evening, by the assistance of the wise little head of Bianco, whose knowledge of the city and of the people was marvelous, Camillo matured his plan, and in a miraculously short space of time he gathered about him his infant retainers, some of whom had arrived at slight attainment under previous masters. Out of the motley throng, he selected some ten or twelve little boys and girls, armed each with an instrument and placed them all under the tutorage of

Bianco and Rosetta, Rosetta being mother-superior to all and supreme enchantress over the art of ballads, an uncommon stock of which, representing every known or unknown human emotion from pathos to humor, from the trivially sentimental to the classic, she held on her tongue's end. Under the guidance of these masters the class surpassed all previous records of latter-day conservatories. In less than a month each had been graduated in his particular specialty—violinist, accordeonist, harpist, mandolinist, etc., etc.

The garret pealed and thundered. The rockery rang. It positively swelled and trembled with the cross-fire vollies of incessant music. Poor, suffering neighbors! They complained. They looked. They denounced, and some of them swore. When the conservatorie pandemonium had unfalteringly progressed into the third week, Mrs. Cluben with astonishment mingled with rage placed her hands upon her hips, looked aloft and cried, "Mine Got in Himmel!"

But there was no rest. Such screams! Such noise! Such music! Such squalling fiddles! Such thruming harps! Such everlasting groans issuing from the many voiced, many colored accordeon! Such blasts! Such din never from chaos came! But this was thrift for Camillo. For many were the promising lads and many the promising lassies, in that select dozen. None were over twelve and two were slight midgets of six years. They were all Italians. There was Carina with her little accordeon, her dark dreamy eyes and silent face. There was Cavalcino with his harp, whose broad but nimble hand knew so well those mysterious

strings. There was Krinkle, addicted to "sniping," that is rescuing cigar stumps from premature decay, but whose wrist knew well the grace of the violin bow; he was only ten. There was Figaro, nicknamed "Ribby,"—gone all to nerves, brain and bone but endowed with mysterious musical powers. And there was Creta—sweet little Creta, with her glossy dark hair and Grecian profile, who next to Rosetta herself, there shall not another appear in this book more like the song bird.

Camillo divided them into three and sometimes four attacking squadrons, Bianco and Rosetta acting as his aid de camps, whilst he himself sat calmly under his blue awning surveying from this safe retreat the problematic heroism of the day.

In a short time the intellect of Rosetta, female and child though she was, evinced its powers over Bianco; even valorous, soldiery and precocious though he undeniably was. To her was yielded by degrees supreme command.

When in the evenings Rosetta came home, and with trembling step and aching back ascended the long stair and wound about the narrow passage-way till through the dim light she felt her way up to the garret, she flung her little body upon the bed exhausted. The duties devolving upon her had become too arduous for one of her years. In the morning she gave her orders and directed wisely the infant detachments in their inexorable duties, flung her own lute over her shoulder and with a young harper attendant started forth to new exploits. In the evening when the strolling,

hungry players came home there was a tempest. Each instrument must be scrutinized by Rosetta and accurately reported to Camillo the padre, who after administering a sharp flogging to the urchin who had unluckily damaged his instrument; or after he had plucked Rosetta by the ear for her compassionate silence and refusal to impeach her fellow troubadours, he would proceed to glue and mend.

Missing strings must be supplied and in the morning each instrument must be put in readiness for the next coup de main. Besides, there was cooking and innumerable household duties. Rosetta pined in the new regime which to the padre was accelerated thrift, but which to her had matured into the bitterest slavery.

The mind is most reflective when the heart is sad. Rosetta gave herself up to brooding melancholy. Oh, that the good old days of simple troubadour life could again return! She longed for freedom. She sweltered in the garret, sleepless during the long, hot August nights. She had visions of fields, and brooks, and running waters and the great green woods whose shadows possessed for her an unspeakable awe. She saw children at play upon the green sward, and heard their bubbling laughter and long she stood with wistful eyes, peering through the latticed fence. Some times she wept, but again became moody and silent, smothering the discontent which glowed like embers in her breast.

One day, unable to forego the temptation further, she approached Camillo timidly and supplicated for a

day in the woods and meadows, the only holiday since her first hour of bondage for which she had prayed. Camillo answered her with a frown, and rudely shaking her, said "No!"

As Rosetta grew older her beauty seemed increasing; her voice was more entrancing; the number of her songs had become comparatively endless; and therefore had her worth finally arisen to a fabulous price in the greedy eyes of Camillo. He could only look upon her as his slave, and treat her accordingly. Every day lost by her produced a painful shrinkage in Camillo's exchequer. She was the main-wheel in his now smoothly moving machine of business. A pause of hers detailed a delay throughout the entire structure. No, Camillo could not spare Rosetta. The golden sheaves, so long denied him were now falling thick and fast. He must garner them in unbroken haste.

Besides, there was a change coming over Camillo—unseen by himself, but acutely perceived by Rosetta. It was for the worse. His long famished desire for money and fortune, had bred in him a passion; and like those who have starved, his wild eyes gloated over the present spoil, and he fell-to, as a mad man. He became a victim to greed.

As his silver increased, his fist tightened. As closed his fist, so closed his heart. In fact the grip of the former was but a reflex of the latter. From him fast oozed all kindness, all pity, all humanity. But a day was fast approaching filled with retribution. He did not see it, nor could have dreamed of it. But it

was even then at hand. However, Camillo did not in any manner curtail the rich tawdry in which his skill robed Rosetta. Her showy colors dazzled with their unique novelty; the bead-work which glittered about her neck and breast, the gorgeous buckle upon her sash, the brilliant cincture upon her head, which set off the dark auburn tresses, were newly supplied when worn or faded. For it was with these she subdued and enchanted. But woe for Rosetta. She had fallen in love.

She was but a child of nature—unguided and adrift upon the world. Untrained in social guile, free and untrammeled by the harness of conventional propriety, she had come but once within the circle of that sacred enchantment wherein young hearts breath for the first and but once of that ethereal element, so boundless in its magnitude, so subtle in its touch, so transcendant in its power. She had looked but once upon the fatal mask. For her, it was a day of fate. Yet sad, very sad was it—he whom she adored perhaps she could never meet. Far removed above her was he. It was a giddy height upon which she cast her longing eyes, a crested peak in the clouds, far above the slumbering darkness of the valley, in which she lived. But up there she saw the sun of hope who sat in his unearthly gold; and she longed and prayed, that some day she might bathe her soul in the colors which painted the landscapes. Bitterly she saw the barriers which divided her from him. But secretly and unremittingly in her heart she nursed the fire of hope and kept alive those tender thoughts of young passion,

more pure than lily blossoms sinking and rising with the evanescent waters. One look, and the image had been fixed upon her young mind—so open and free to the first touch of love. She could not resist her dreams; in fact she did not try—she rather encouraged that vision which went with her into the street and returned with her as descended the evening sun sprinkling her homeward path with buoyant light. By times she felt borne above the earth and floating like the down of a bird in the air. She had all those reveries of the pillow, which haunt the sleep of love, for through even the crannied homes of the most lowly enter those beatific visions. She heard the rustle of their wings, she heard their whisperings, and she listened with guileless confidence to their rapturous stories.

Yea, deeply had Rosetta fallen into the entrammeling meshes of love. Cavalcino was with her that day and carried his violin. She vividly recalled how she had mangled a half dozen notes; but how the deft fingers of Cavalcino had woven their otherwise discordant fragments into a wreath of sweetness; how an unusual throbbing about her heart had cut some gentle quavers in her speech as she sang the Italian ballad to him; how her eyes suffused irresistibly as the strange emotion swept from heart to brain; how her voice had rippled and trilled as she had ventured one look deep into the eyes of him whose sorcery she could not understand, but to whose mystery she had yielded. All this she recalled—yea, cherished and pressed close to her heart. For it filled a void which

nature herself had provided in her soul. Yea, for did it not warm into being, thoughts and dreams never as yet evoked by aught of nature? Had it not turned the great earth itself into a huge pantheon of sweet images?

For a week she had been existing under the influence of a spell. Would it ever die? Could that vision ever fade? She was but a child of nature, ignorant and blissful in the non-conventional air of unrestrained love. Therefore whilst she loved, true to the fundamental instincts of her sex, she dropped all other earthly association and followed slave-like and unquestioned her ideal—if not in reality at least in those far more romantic fields, in the imagination itself. By times she seemed to lose herself in abstraction; disdaining the rugged, colorless earth she arose and floated in the air.

Yet had the spell filled otherwise with such delights, wrought upon her sensibilities, sharpening the anger of Camillo into barbed arrows, darkening his frown into a cloud whose presence shadowed and disturbed her vision—making less endurable her slavery, the yoke of which she now felt herself to have outgrown. She had become reflective in a single day. By a sudden transformation she was enabled to weigh her fortune. She cast a glance back far into the devious past, into the dusky shadows of the past, and saw there rekindled into life the image of her father, he whose memory she had long ago consigned to the dust of things forgotten. She saw again the cities she had entered in her wanderings. One by one arose

her devious steps, from the indefinite darkness of memory coming forth into the light of reality—out from the chaos of recollection.

She had been exalted. She looked with keen sense upon the present. She projected her young mind prophetically into the future, but nothing was there for her save the unsubstantial vision of love, around the radiant form of which fell nought but night—and she brooded in melancholy. Would she ever again hear him speak? Yea, would she ever again see him? Had she not secretly traced his foot-steps to the gate? Had she not seen him pass up the long walk between the heavy trees? Had he not vanished—yea, vanished forever within the vine-clad portico of the house? Had she not watched in secret for him—in silence where nought but her beating heart was heard above all nature? Poor Rosetta! unutterably melancholy, under the enchantment of her ideal—transcendant in the affection she now so ruthlessly lavished upon a shadow.

CHAPTER XXII.

BIANCO'S NECROMANCY.—THE HEART'S MARTYRDOM.

CASSI BIANCO, who had been Rossetta's attendant many times of late, whilst upon a day's tour of music, had noted that in her face which led him to know, young as he was, that there had something gone wrong; and one day he accosted her in this wise —for Bianco was a remarkable boy:

"Rosetta, why do you look so sad?"

"Cassi, dear, see you around about us these great hills, and tell me how long I am to wander over them, gathering pennies for Camillo? Can you read my fortune in my hand? Padre says you are wise for one so young. Did you not learn in your wanderings some art by which we can read the future in the marks of the hand or in the chance of cards?"

They had been wandering over one of the great hills that flank the city on the east. It was late in the afternoon. The day had been one of tiresome wandering, and they were now seated in the shade of a hedge which hemmed in the rear of a spacious yard, in which stood a mansion of magnificent size and beauty, shaded by great elms, pine and cedar. Cassi had placed the harp reclining against the hedge, first covering its delicate strings with the brown worn cloth in which it was cautiously encased whilst at rest. He himself was reclining upon a grassy hillock, resting his head and shoulders against a stone upon

which sat Rosetta, who was casually striking at intervals the tender strings of a lute, whilst dreamily looking far down the valley to a point where through the western heights the broad, glistening river lost itself between the hills. A few birds danced and twittered in the hedges, or alighted upon the ground near by, rattling the many colored leaves. Rosetta and Bianco were musing upon the long clouds of thin smoke which were passively stealing from out the many factory towers. They watched it rise silently higher and higher till it lost itself in the calm sky or swept majestically southward where it seemed to blend after many leagues with the far away horizon. They heard the distant sonorous notes of the steamers as lazily they plowed here and there, like minature things of life away down there in the river. They saw the flat tops of houses, the streets and alleys, like a vast checker-work below them, through the meshes of which passed and repassed teams and pedestrians, winding in and winding out like ants and beetles. To the south, cresting the Kentucky shore, lay the city of Covington. By times a wandering leaf, glittering for a moment in the sunlight dropped at their feet, for it was fall and a great harvest of twigs and many-colored leaves lay in shoals upon the ground.

"Yes, Rosetta," answered Bianco, "I know an old Florentine who works many mysteries and makes a living by selling amulets, putting spells upon people and trading in charms. Give me your hand. No, the left. Let me study for a moment the line of life,

the marks of art and those little elevations called Mars, Jupiter, Venus and Moon." The dark, curly head of Cassi Bianco bent above the hand of Rosetta with the assumed skill of a seer. He could mimic the old Florentine both in words and action.

"There is the line of life, but it is broken," began Bianco after the manner of the Florentine as near as he could recollect. "Yes, broken. That is a tragedy! But how or when? Let me see. Here is Fortune like the marks of two strings cut deep in the wrist. Rosetta you will be rich after a great struggle. Yes, Mars is large, but then here is Venus who keeps the mysteries over the heart, and at her left stands Moon, the Goddess of Love, which drives me into what old Staccato Mero says—" and he repeated it in Italian—"Are you now, or have you ever been in love?"

Rosetta, looking upon the upturned little brown face, blushed deeply. She tried to hide the truth with a smile, but her eyes filling with a mist, she turned her head, answering, "Why, Cassi, do you ask?"

"I am a pupil of Staccato Mero, and this is the question he always asks when Mars and Venus threaten for here fortune takes one of two roads as Staccato says; that is, it leads to the heart or to the head. If to the head it is wealth, if to the heart it is love."

Rosetta withdrew her hand and struck a soft cord upon the lute, following the same with a few words from a Spanish love ballad. Bianco, slightly vexed that Rosetta withheld the necessary revelation without which he assured her the wisest of sorcerers were powerless, glanced into Rosetta's eyes where the mist

had gathered into a perceptible dew; and there he beheld the answer. For had not Staccato Mero once said "in the eye of the maiden read you the token of her heart."

With the true instinct of the sorcerer, wishing to make more obscure his art, and thereby lend greater plausibility to his story, taking her hand again gently he began: "Ah, I see! Mero was a great man, for he said there is much in the eyebrow, the nose, the eyes, and the lips. Your lips are like red coral and you have pretty teeth, all straight, and so even. And then your eyebrows are raised in the center and thin and pretty as a pencil mark. Did you ever notice Padre's eyebrows? They are thick and point up at the side. They are savage; and, yes, your nose is what Mero calls Greek. Rosetta, did you ever look into your eyes? They are so large, and the brown spot in them looks like a deep well? I can see my picture in them, like in a mirror. Now I will tell you the rest, for I can see it is the heart and not the head. You have a lover!"

Rosetta trembled, grew pale about the mouth and was about to speak. But Bianco went on. Glancing first at the mysterious marks upon the hand and then upon her pretty face which was awed into silence by the prophetic story—"You are sure to have a tragedy. The line of life is broken! And as Venus shall triumph over Mars by the help of the Moon, your lover may be either taken from you by another, lost at sea, or he may go to war and be shot! Yes he is more likely to go to war and be shot than to be lost at sea, for Mars

triumphs over Neptune—a little God, I had forgotten —Do you see him there?" And looking again into Rosetta's face which had blanched before a fate so accurately detailed by the now more than wonderful Bianco, the young wizard went on—"Shot in war!" —he shook his dark curly head, "Oh, Rosetta, you should be proud to have him shot in war."

"But I cannot, Cassi, I want him to live. Look again, Cassi, perhaps there is another little God you have forgotten."

Bianco buried his wise head again and apparently gave his soul into the cares of the mysteries. Rosetta was conquered. She was awed, and her silence, and pallor betokened that absolute faith which had taken hold on her.

Bianco looked at her hand with wisest scrutiny, repeating a barbarous sentence of incantation whose grim and hipshot syllables defy all orthography, but the meaning of which to Rosetta was a chaos of a hundred imaginings, all filled with bright, prophetic probabilities. Again Bianco sighed, as if worried by some over-powering mental contest. Grasping a tress of dark hair which fell over her shoulders he held it in the sunlight; plucked two dark shreds out by the roots, which slightly frightened his subject, who nevertheless stood more in awe of his wonderful powers. He wound the hairs about his fingers then let them loose like zephyr in a little puff of wind which seemed conjured up for that very purpose; watched the thin floating spirals as slowly they drifted, drifted far out into the ether of space and were lost in the unknown.

The last act in the conjuration was at hand. He walked some distance, lifted with grave pomposity a large stone from its ancient resting place and snatched therefrom some object the presence of which seemed to shed appropriate light upon the subject and clear away for all the dusty cobwebs of doubt. He had certainly been a very close observer of the old Florentine; for with an exclamation filled at once with the wildest, indescribable delight and weird prophetic cadence, his eyes filled to the brim with strange fire, his face wearing the distorted figure of one under the influence of something unearthly, he exclaimed in Italian, "I have it, I have it!" following the same with a repetition of the previous barbaric incantation. Then with solemnity he placed the object, which he had taken from under the stone at Rosetta's feet.

It was an immense snail, half incased within its calcareous house; its two antennæ and little head wiggling and darting here and there in unmistakable surprise at being thus used as the medium between the natural and the supernatural. To its side hung a piece of crystal quarts, the great value of which Cassi Bianco, filled to the brim as he was with the very stuff of necromantic genius, immediately seized upon and put to appropriate use, following in most scrupulous detail his keen imagination and all that he had ever seen or heard in the field of abstruce art or occult science.

"Keep it! Keep it!" cried he. "It is valuable; it is the snail stone; Staccato Mero sells them for amulets. Keep the stone and he will not be shot in

battle nor die upon the sea. Listen, for I know all."

"Hush! Silence!" cried Rosetta under her breath, at the same moment pointing to two forms which, unseen by Bianco had come forth from the yard as if conjured into mysterious presence by the enchantment. One form turned for a moment and looked upon Rosetta, then arm in arm both apparitions disappeared. It was Maurice Severgn and his friend. Rosetta turned to an ashy paleness, completely nonplussed, bewildered and amazed.

It was enough. "Come," muttered she, holding fast to her lute and the snail-stone; and they started upon their homeward journey, for the sun was then sinking behind the western hills, and over the city in the valley below was stealing the long, gray shadows of evening.

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Several weeks had now elapsed since I had first experienced that flood of emotion aroused by the attentions which my rival had paid Rose Cimarron. During this time my being had experienced a change, though my heart's passion had known no abatement. My resolution was of adamant. Rose Cimarron was too exalted a character—she had known the blessings of wealth, and though modest and plain in her daily habits, she had been raised in *a palace*. I cannot explain the feeling of solemn resignation which had taken hold on me. Perhaps it was a feeling like that experienced by the martyr as he stands firmly and without a quiver in the presence of irrevocable fate. The presence of

Henry Blakemore had lost its demoniac enchantment. From my heart, the meanness of jealousy had vanished. I knew my rival was a noble man. I laid not a straw in his way. However, there was another circumstance which I will relate.

Rose's father was a man of profound learning. During the earlier part of his career he had spent several years before the mast. From the lowest possible station of a poor sailor boy he had arisen steadily to the dignity of captain and was now a heavy shareholder in an ocean-line of steamers. He was also interested in silver mines which he told me were located in Nevada. His last ten years of life, however, had been entirely devoted to the life of an erudite. His profound learning, coupled with his experience as a traveler, made of him a man of rare interest. Why this old gentleman had conceived such a liking for me I cannot explain; unless it was for the intelligence I displayed in several branches of his pet pursuits and the honest interest I unconsciously manifested in his truly wonderful dissertations.

Thus under the enchantment of this gray headed old man I frequently found the evening hours slipping swiftly on into the late night. During one of these protracted interviews, it had chanced that Henry Blakemore had been entertained by Rose. During this evening, although the stream of conversation poured forth at its usual full tide of rarest interest, I felt the recurring shock of my heart sending its waves like a pulsing tide through my brain and at intervals mute abstraction paralyzed my tongue. It cannot be

presumed that this escaped my wise host. The consciousness of my temporary inability became distressing and I arose to depart, but my generous host prolonged my stay—taking me into secret apartments of his wonderful mansion, displaying to me the value of his huge library and explaining the mystery of his laboratory. When finally I bade him adieu, and had taken my departure down the spacious hall, Rose came from an adjoining room and met me. For the past half hour she had been entirely alone. "I learned this evening for the first time," she began, "that you talk of going to Australia?" For a moment I looked into Rose's face in mute reflection. "Not *talking* of it, but I have resolved," answered I. "Is not America broad enough for you?" lowly inquired Rose with a faint smile. "Yes," pondered I, thoughtfully, "yes, I could easily loose myself in the mountain regions of the West."

"Why should you desire to loose yourself?" inquired she, again smiling.

The remarkable experience which from that hour fastened upon me shall be told in brief space.

Time sped rapidly and the hour for my departure would soon arrive—the twenty-second day of May. The tremendous responsibility of my determined move, the fact that I was to sever my relationship forever from all that to me was of worth in my native land, had worn deeply on my mind. The insidious footsteps of a fever had also been making inroads upon me. One morning I awakened from a delirium.—"What are these things about me?" inquired I of a nurse who

sat by me. I listened for the trembling of the ocean steamer upon which I was certain I had embarked the day before. "About how many leagues at sea are we?" My nurse looked into my face in mute pity. I turned upon my couch with a groan, for distinctly the tremors of the huge vessel came to my senses, and blue and vast the limitless waters seemed to encircle me, as on sped our majestic steamer steadily like a thing of life. After a time, again uneasily I turned and looked into the female face that had first greeted me. Between the phantom clouds that rolled before my vision I recognized that face. I gazed long and fixedly —perhaps with wild and terrible eyes. Suddenly, I was certain of my judgment, and I exclaimed: "Speak, Rose—In God's name where are we?"

The real waters of the ocean are not more impressive in their majesty of beauty or terror than can be the restless billows of delirium. No mariner has ever explored worlds comparable to those seen in voyages of the human mind. I was now in a hospital recovering from a fever and this was Rose Cimarron who had come to visit me.

On the following day Rose was attended by her father.

"My physician informs me that I will be strong enough to embark upon the sea within a month," remarked I in the course of our conversation. "Would you not be as well pleased to take a trans-continental route via San Francisco?" questioned he. I was silent. "My interests in Nevada are somewhat disturbed. My acquaintance with you assures me of your competency

to act as my agent. If you will accept the obligation I will pay you well for your service and furnish you with a pass to the Pacific Slope. You will be then three thousand miles nearer to your port of destination."

Reaching forth my trembling hand and grasping his, I answered, "I thank you! I will accept the obligation."

During my days of convalescence it gradually became astonishingly apparent to me that along with Rose's admiration for the character of Maurice Severgn there was likely an ulterior motive in her inquisitiveness. Were the secrets of the Cimarron family anywise connected with the facts that I was revealing? The extreme likelihood of this was certainly foreshadowed in her questions.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE BEING WHOM ROSETTA LOVED.

THE immediate and daily actions of man are mainly directed by himself, but the action of a lifetime lies far beyond his personal control; for there is an Infinite Destiny that directs the ultimate end of his being.

Several individuals who had been unconsciously commissioned to produce an important future drama in the life of Maurice Severgn had already appeared near the orbit of his being. Rosetta was one of these individuals. However, let us proceed.

In the eastern part of the city of Cincinnati, in that locality which in those days possessed the most aristocratic coloring, lived a doctor. He was now past the middle age of life; a man of varied attainments and culture; a man with convictions upon the vices of the times and with drugs and specifics for their cure. In politics he was a Radical of the North; that is to say, an Abolitionist. But more of this hereafter. He was a graduate of an eastern university, being schooled in the science of medicine in the city of New York, receiving his commission as a practicing physician and surgeon as early as 1832. He was then but twenty-five years of age. Very early years indeed to be so exalted. Yet with an intellect surpassing his fellows he gained the prize of his class and along with it a chair as assistant surgeon in the Hospital of New York. This position he retained for two years, serving out his term, when like the youth of to-day he embarked for the West; the then boundless mysterious, awful West. All beyond the Mississippi an unsurveyed wilderness! Trackless, vast! Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana freshly carved from the great Northwestern Territory, foster children of the federal government, concessions from old Virginia, who with magnanimity had thus reduced her imperial domain from its original vastness to its present size, to conciliate her weaker sisters; asking only the slight boon in lieu thereof, "that she be allowed to hunt and recapture her negro fugitives in the land of the abolitionist."

This young man had come forth into the outposts

of civilization. Crossing the mountains—formidable obstacles in those days—he came to the Ohio river where he embarked and floated westward, his objective point being Cincinnati. He landed, and lived to see a village grow to the immensity of a city. Likewise during the time had he grown wealthy, and besides the latter he had gained the respect of all who knew him and had won the distinction of highest intellectual worthiness. This man's name was Doctor Robert North.

Doctor North had now become a man of experience and years. But did he not tacitly pledge us interesting revelation, we should not have occasion to thus again subject him to interview, except as it were, perhaps for the political colorings his character might lend; for Dr. North was a politician; as few strong men could well live in the midst of an uprising social revolution like the one in which he lived, without being affected with the contagion of the times.

As might be surmised, there was a little romance attached to the life of Dr. North, as there is perhaps in every life. Prior to his departure for the West, his persistent appeals through proper official channels finally secured the release of Father Jerome. Margaret was again placed in school and the old debtor began again to live. Through the instrumentality of the young man who was now far in the West, and most careful economy, Father Jerome crept along very comfortably in his extreme age. Margaret never knew from whence came the money—but they lived, somehow, and were happy. Thus some five or six years

slipped by. One day a very strong and handsome young man appeared at the home of Father Jerome. "Margaret," began he, "will you go with me beyond the Alleghenies, far into the western wilds? We have laid out the foundation of a great city in the Ohio valley. We are connecting the lines of commerce throughout the vastness of the Mississippi region to the Gulf. Will you go? I want you for my wife."

The unaided imagination can easily develop the remaining features of this picture, and fill in with appropriate colorings the time that thence rolled on till we find Robert and his wife Margaret many years after, at home in the city—the village which had finally grown till it had overleaped the boundaries of prophecy; when the threads of commerce of which he had spoken, had knit together the cities of that vast valley which he had faintly outlined to her.

* * *

About the hour that Rosetta and Bianco had taken their departure down the steep incline of the hill which was finally to lead them into the busy haunts of the city, Doctor North was returning home from his afternoon calls among the sick. In due time he found himself seated in the surgical and library room of his beautiful home.

"Robert, dear, you are unusually late this evening," exclaimed Mrs. Dr. North to her husband in the evening when he had returned at a late hour. For he held his clinic at the College of Physicians and Surgeons from three o'clock to four o'clock, after which

he usually returned to his home where he met patients awaiting him.

"Yes, wife, but I was called out of my way and had to cross the river. Young Severgn sent his valet Belshazzar in haste, his mother being taken suddenly ill," responded the doctor, whilst casually examining a slight embrasure of his left hand which an accident of the afternoon had occasioned.

"Oh, serious?" inquired Mrs. North, who although wholly unacquainted with Madam Severgn, yet in this case as in all others showed a loving anxiety for her husband's patient.

"Nothing serious—nervous prostration coupled with a local ailment, Margaret—oh, I see! You were about to get it for me! I was going to suggest a plaster for my hand!"

"What a sorry cut!" exclaimed Mrs. North, softly binding the dampened plaster to the hand.

"I was not aware of its depth myself!"

"A very strange family, the Severgns, Robert?" exclaimed Mrs. North, still binding the wound.

"Puzzling indeed! and yet Margaret most interesting, very pleasant people!"

"I have heard much of them, especially of the son — Maurice, I believe is his name."

"Have you met the Madam?"

"Not to speak with her."

"A most charming lady, Margaret, and in fact a wonderful personage! As well she might be; reconing the character of her son. However, there is something in her nature, down deep, and unreadable—something brooding. I fear it is melancholy."

"Melancholy?" inquired Mrs. North.

"Yes. And yet they are so well fixed. A valuable estate, affluence, all the heart can wish. I cannot understand Madam's reclusiveness. As for her son, it is easily explained. He is a persistent student."

'The wealth displayed by Madam Severgn in the purchase of so valuable an estate, and the trim neatness of the vassalage has ensured for her a position in the most exacting southern aristocracy."

"Four, slick black slaves, the choicest in the New Orleans market!" exclaimed the doctor, in a tone of endorsement.

"But most astonishing it is, she makes no use of them. It is strange that one with the most pronounced advantages should severly abstain from the social circles."

"Ah, Margaret, there is a cause, there is a cause. There is something which wealth cannot cure! I was never more sure of that, than at this call. There is an under note of pathos in the life of Madam Severgn."

"Poor lady! That is what I hear. But the world, prying as it is, has failed to reach the merest probability. As for myself, I have been endeared to her since I read the last article written for The Liberator by her son. Vivid, indeed beyond the usual powers of youthful writers."

The world had been indeed curious. And Mrs. North simply related to her husband in a casual manner what so many times she had heard passed concerning the Severgns. The world had said that Madam

Severgn abhored ostentation. That was certain. Yet did she not go unnecessarily far in this? Ostentation in itself was not amiable. Indeed it was selfish. Yet for what purpose were chariots, liveries and negroes made, if not to set off as in a gilt molding the magnificence of their possessor? What was the function of those elegant bays which the fat slave-jockey groomed throughout the entire week? if not to herald fashion and wealth, to dazzle the admiring crowd, to add new lustre to the names of friends and relatives, as by a reflecting glass. Yet, Madam had no relatives, at least none had yet appeared. But were there not the Browns, the Potters and the Whites, neighbors and social lights in the bargain who would gladly exchange compliments? Why such a structure for a dwelling if not kept as the fashionable saloon for the elite? Thus pondered the world. Thus gossiped it, petulant and prying because Madam found pleasure at home and rapture in Maurice.

When finally an indefinite description of the interior of the Severgn mansion had reached the public ear, their curiosity knew no bound. "A vast library moulding in unuse! A gallery darkened and hid from the eye of the public! Why cherish it? Why not dedicate the entire outfit to an institution of learning? A veritable treasure, rightfully the public's, but hidden and unused!" But the world one day grew more considerate.

"A perfect palace of art and a museum combined, Margaret!" exclaimed the doctor. "I saw paintings from Paris, etchings from Flanders and Munich, and

some very rare works from Vienna. Nothing to equal them in the West. A very emporium of wonder! Massive cabinets, filled with the rarest of antique specimens, a magnificent collection of stuffed birds; American, Australian, and some indigenous of the dark Amazon forests with flaming plumage. All reports concerning Maurice Severgn are confirmed. Great cabinets of minerals! some precious stones—one large room entirely devoted to geology! Why, I believe the young man has a specimen of every known rock under the sun! And there were the ores in the crude state fresh from the mines, nicely labeled. Rock, mineral and bird; with date and locality of discovery, name of family, species, order and genus marked upon them with as much tenderness as though they were children of the household. I was entranced! Carried back to college days. . Though let me say, the collection in the Severgn mansion is scarcely rivaled by any institution of learning in the land." Mrs. North listened with wraped attention, for she was much of a specimen hunter herself; though her tastes led her more directly in the line of the æsthetic. She had large collections of pressed flowers, representing the flora of the immediate neighborhood and many rare selections from foreign lands. She was well versed in botany, besides being a skilled florist.

The doctor continued, "I saw lava from Pompeii and a sulphurous piece labeled 'Popocatepetl.' One thing very rare indeed was a nugget of California gold, said to have come round by the Strait of Magellan."

One of the main features of a trip to the gold fields of California in that day—and one to be dreaded, let it be said—was the passage of the storm-beaten Strait of Magellan, and escape from the difficult rocks of Cape Horn. But the traveler was not forced to go by the ocean-way, did he dare a perhaps more hazardous journey over the trackless plains and across "the Rockies," threading his route by ox or mule team through bands of savages.

"Oh, yes! another curiosity. I saw a piece of pine bark from one of the giant trees of California. It was remarkable, being about four feet in thickness."

It was truly wonderful signified Mrs. North. She had read articles from the scientific journals of the times concerning these California giants, but was "truly happy to learn that the wonders of the newly acquired province were being brought East." California, only a few years previous, being a province of Mexico. This led them into conversation upon the conquest of Mexico, and thence upon the politics of the times; admitting with a slight grudge the wisdom of the slave-power which had with a few gallant strokes carried the eagle of the Republic to the Pacific Coast, and planted the stars and stripes upon the peaks of the Rocky Mountains.

Doctor North continued. "One needs but to walk through those galleries of the Severgns, and become learned. The object lessons are all there. Besides the specimens which I have mentioned there were numerous charts; geological, mineralogical, astronomical, botanical, historical, etc., etc. Indeed it is but

a student's paradise unequaled by anything of which I have ever read or heard."

At this, the tinkling of a bell announced that dinner was ready. Dr. North and his wife retired to the dining room, where the savory odor of the eatables greeted them. Seating themselves alone at the small table as they had been used to do for these many years of their married life—they being childless—the doctor continued talking, whilst his wife poured the tea from a dainty china tea pot. "I did not meet young Severgn, but from the home of the erudite we can judge of the inmate."

"I have learned much of him," added Mrs. North. "A very prodigy of learning! Professor Sweetman, in casually remarking of him but yesterday, declared him a wonder, the modern Eugene Aram—and in some respects destined to surpass that wonderful erudite, being equipped with the exact science of the day and the resources for acquiring learning of which poor Aram never dreamed. It is scarcely comprehensible how one so young could have acquired such a vast store of learning. Yet it is said by way apology, that Madam Severgn is exceedingly wealthy; and her son having had an overweaning fondness for science, and in fact all branches of learning flavoring of the historic or scientific, she has catered for his passion fondly, and persistantly. Each of them have traveled much, and the son being always provided with a private tutor, through whom a ceaseless current of learning has been kept fresh and clear at the threshold of the young, imbibing mind."

"And yet," added the doctor, "it would not seem that his mind had been over fed. He is not of the book-worm type of students. He is tall and muscular. Handsome, in fact!"

It may be well concluded that Maurice Severgn was no piece of human mediocrity, that he should form the basis of so extensive a conversation from such personages as Dr. North and his wife, the former of whom was an acknowledged scholar, and the latter, the brightest of intellectual companions.

The meal had proceeded some time when the notes of a harp were heard gently tinkling, and presently was heard a human voice—that of a female. The doctor and his wife stopped their repast, and leaning easily in their chairs listened to the musical swells of violin, harp and song. It was an Italian roundelay, plaintive yet searching in its cadence. When at last the music had died down to solely the voice and harp, the doctor stepped to the door where he dropped a silver coin in the extended hat of Bianco. It was the last effort of Rosetta and her little friend to regain the loss occuring upon the flight of idle time upon the hill. They had added a quarter to their bag of coins. Rosetta betaking herself toward home, Bianco was entrusted to report during the evening to Camillo.

And here let us turn to the final issue of that day, so eventful in the life of the girl.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CAMILLO MEETS A DANGEROUS ACQUAINTANCE.

IT was eight o'clock and merging into dusk. The distant chimes in the far away steeple had struck the hour. Uneasily in slow measured tread walked Camillo beside his booth. Behind the western hills the sun had sunk and the shadows of night were fast creeping up street and alley. Upon the corners the street-lamps were glinting and the merchant's windows were illumined for the night. Twilight was abroad. The blue awning of Camillo's booth swayed by times in a just perceptible breeze. The flame of the torch danced and glowed and waved its banner of fire and smoke casting grim shadows upon the wall and over the various fruits and candies. Camillo sat down upon a low stool; rubbed his hatless head, then chafed his stubbled chin whilst humming an old Mexican war ballad and looking southward toward the river—down into those streets where night had gathered in impenetrable thickness. The rich freight of the stand composed of figs, lemons, pineapples, nuts and candies spread its odor promiscuously about. The fire in the peanut-roaster had partially died out, and the steam came from out the whistle with a marked absence of that shrill noise which throughout the day had told the people of its industrious presence.

For some unaccountable reason, Padre Camillo had made fewer sales that day than on any previous; and his liver being likewise much disordered by a certain

incident of the day, he was now brooding bitterly upon a theme which was soon to ripen into a very dangerous cataclysm.

It was about this time of the evening after the close of the day in which Rosetta had been brought closer and more irrevocably near to her idol by the wonderful powers of Bianco, that Bianco happened to be approaching the booth of Camillo; he having been delegated custodian of the money purse which he was directed to carry to the old padrone.

Having approached quite near the booth he observed Camillo and a lithe middle-aged man, whom he had seen cross the street but a short time previous, in conversation. The words were low and inarticulate. Their heated emphasis, however, caused the precocious Bianco to halt. He was not seen. The words were given in Italian. His curiosity was irresistibly heightened by certain words which his acute ears picked from the otherwise incoherent utterances. Did he not hear the name of Rosetta? He harkened for his own name to be connected therewith, but heard in its place other words emphatically spoken which denoted the high temper of Camillo. He stooped down and crept beneath one corner of the booth protected by the awning, and bent his whole soul to the discovery of what was taking place. For his curiosity was enlarged by the fact that the stranger —for stranger he was to Bianco—was an Italian, and he had once been heard to say "Mexico;" wherefore was it not possible that he bore relation to Camillo which it was worthy for Bianco to learn? Crouching

low and peeping through a small opening he saw the redish beard and Celtic countenance of the stranger, which denoted that he was an Italian from the North of Italy—the people of North Italy being of the same blood as the Celts of Ireland and more related to these far-off island people than to the swarthy sons of South Italy.

"Diable! Cavilazo," exclaimed Camillo in a hot under-tone, looking fiercely into the eyes of the Celt, at the same time clutching at his own breast as if stricken with pain at what had just been uttered. The flame from the torch lighted up the scene with a yellowish coloring; the long shadows rising and falling, disappearing and coming as the capricious light danced upon its sputtering wick. The Italian patois, so peculiar in an Italian's rude attempt at English, was entirely absent in this conversation; as both spake in well chosen Italian language.

"You thought me dead?" inquired the Celt.

"It has been my dream," responded Camillo—his swarthy face and tone of speech indicating a bitter disappointment at the presence of the unwelcome guest.

"Cavilàzo," began Camillo, "you need not refer to all these old transactions. They are of the dead past. I have—God knows I have fought against their recollection. My life is not as it was. I have forgotten the friends of my youth, for they were thieves and cut-throats. What will you have of me? Had we not parted for life in "forty-five?" Did we not each of us take our course; you for Cuba, I for the North? What

debt goes unpaid between us? Did we not part as friends?"

"As friends. And friends we are yet, unless you choose to make us enemies. Camillo, had you failed, I had stood ready to share with you my last coin."

"Cavilazo, what I have, I keep! For none have shared the toil with me to gain it. I accepted the situation. I went forth again, and I have been fortunate. I have built upon the small capital, the few coins given me. I have thrived; but look upon me, a broken down old man. You accuse me of ingratitude; I have nothing for which to be grateful. You threaten; I disdain you! Besides my accumulations will scarce suffice the wants of age. I can relieve, but divide? No!—this I will not! My money awakens no remorse. It is the rightful fruit of sweat; not blood. Thank God I have no bonds with you. Thank God, I am through with knaves and rascals! No, Cavilazo, I will assist, for I have charity. But no further!"

"Have you forgotten the hour in which our solemn oaths bound us as brothers?"

"I have not forgotten it; but I have foresworn the stipulation before the priest. I have repented me. Do not approach me Cavilazo upon these fading memories. I have been absolved. I am not Camillo as you knew him in days past. Do not drive me to anger."

"I shall see, Camillo, what I can do," exclaimed the Celt in a menacing tone.

"I give you leave," replied Camillo, assured of the impotency of Cavilazo's threat. "Do all in your power. My money shall remain my money!"

"Do you know this? the hand writing of Aspero," asked Cavilazo, bringing from his vest pocket something which had the appearance of a crumpled letter.

Camillo glanced upon the signature—the letter being still held by Cavilazo. "It is a forgery!" exclaimed he.

"Not so fast!" exclaimed Cavilazo, bringing from the other pocket a small daguerreotype which glittered in the dim light.

The quick eye of Camillo fell upon the likeness, and his face alighted with painful apprehensions. "Aspero!" gasped Camillo to himself—"Aspero," reiterated Cavilazo, with stoic coldness.

Camillo, overwhelmed, crushed and sickened by that which like the lightning bolt had fallen about his head, turned his back upon his persecutor with poorly assumed courage and indifference, then slowly paced toward his stool upon which he sat down in feigned composure and began cracking pecans, placing the kernels into a bright little whisky glass—his five cent measure for such viands.

"Shape your own future, I can and will give the path you shall tread," began Cavilazo. "It shall have a gallows for its final end."

Camillo was observed to tremble as he placed the yellow kernels into the glass. "I have saved perhaps three thousand dollars, Cavilazo," began the broken-hearted but enraged Camillo, "I will give you a third."

"You have six; and I shall have half; besides the child—"

"What would you do with her?" quickly asked Camillo, looking up.

"Why, make some money at New Orleans, of course —sell her to the highest bidder!"

Paralyzed with the calamity of the moment, but with eyes glowing with vindictive rage, Camillo arose and reached for an iron awl which had been used for loosening dates and breaking candies. For a moment his eyes and teeth glittered in silence. He could have thrust the awl into the heart of his tormentor had he not at that moment viewed askance the form of a policeman who had been observing the while. Overwhelmed, he sank upon the stool, and burying his face in his hands he exclaimed: "My God, my Rosetta! My Rosetta! My money, my Rosetta! Cruel, cruel Cavilazo!" But soon he arose again, the gleam of his eyes now more frightful, and pointing southward with a significant gesture into the deep shadows, he glared upon Cavilazo whilst the inarticulate gutteral of his smothered fury vented his unspeakable rage.

"Hark!" interposed Cavilazo, pointing significantly toward one corner of the booth, "is there not some one behind the awning?" Camillo arose, quite as much agitated as his enemy over the possible presence of an eaves-dropper. He hastened behind the booth. Too late! Man or beast, what e'er it was, scampered away through the shadows near the wall. Camillo gave chase, but the object darted into an alley and was instantly lost.

CHAPTER XXV.

ROSETTA.

IT was now merging on to nine of the clock. Rosetta had come home at six. After her evening work had all been performed she seated herself upon the rear balcony, a rude piece of architecture in this case which served the purpose of affording the tenants of that flat the pleasure of escaping the hot air of the inner chambers of their homes during the sultry nights of summer.

Rosetta was musing. She did not hear the din below her, nor see the dirty black roofs of the lesser buildings, the narrow back yard in which lay the usual debris of a refuse depository. Her mind, filled with lovely apparitions, resisted the squalor of the home in which she dwelt. She was now reclining comfortably with her head resting upon the back of her chair, her eyes dreamingly fixed upon the sky, where rolled the shining disk of the moon behind clouds made dark by the contrasting whiteness of the light which fell through their filmy floors.

"How beautiful!" exclaimed Rosetta as she watched the moon cleave without a ripple the great blue sea of heaven. She saw the changing cloud-phantoms which floated there so silent and dark. "How beautiful!" sighed she as she cast her eyes upon the stars of space—upon whose unutterable majesty has looked, and beneath whose mysterious force has sighed

the love stricken hearts of millions. For love turns the sky into a vast mirror of sweet fancies, or perhaps a reservoir from which the soul draws its unearthly sympathies in that hour of hours when it transcends the natural and steals a glance upon the beyond. Rosetta's heart was also deeply worried. Sometimes she ruminated upon the occurrences of the day. She recollected with some dejection that in the morning she had lost a fanciful piece of brass and bead work which Camillo had bought for her sash; and it disturbed her bright visions, for the padre would certainly be angry. The cash receipts of the day had also fallen short a dollar or two, the fact of which not only gave Rosetta chagrin, but caused her to fear punishment; for she had lost fully two hours that day whilst listening to the strange stories of Bianco—his hair-breadth escapes, his capture at Florence—besides the unfolding of his more wonderful powers as a fortune teller. But then did this last memory bring her back again to "him." She had seen her idol. As under a spell he had arisen to view—had passed near her—had looked upon her!

As her fingers now lightly touched the strings of the guitar which she held in her lap, and above, her eyes swept the starry space, she breathed into the night from out her heart the story of her love, sung in words of her own simple imaginings. She had unbound the glittering, metal cincture from her brow, and her hair fell in great waves upon her breast and shoulders. Her eyes were turned upward toward the far-away land of stars and night—her face and throat

slightly whitened by the soft rays of the moon which fell upon her. From out her murmuring lips came her music unusually sweet and low; for her notes were the exhalation of love.

Poor Rosetta! Could she have known the o'erhanging cliffs which frowned and threatened; could she have dismantled them of their golden light; how impassable, how dark with cavernous opening had been the landscape between her and her ideal! But she noted not the intervening valley over which yet hovered the impenetrable mists of fate which hid the possible path of disappointment or mantled the pitfalls of despair. With a bound her over-wrought soul passed the low-lands which lay outstretched indefinitely but surely at her feet, and upon the gilded heights rested her eyes soothed by the uprising orient of love and hope. For in its beams there was a mysterious sweetness awakening emotions hitherto unknown.

Suddenly, she heard the door open, and the unmistakable tread of Camillo approached. He came to the door, looked upon her for a moment, then bade her prepare a light; requesting her to retire immediately. But when she had looked into the padrone's face, noticing there an unusual paleness, she exclaimed: "You are looking sick!"

"No, I am not sick—leave me, Rosetta. But first where is the money-bag?"

"Did not Cassi—? Why, I gave it to him for that purpose."

"I have not seen Cassi. Why have you done this? You have done wrong."

Rosetta was silent.

"How much did you make to-day?"

"Two dollars in all," answered she fearfully.

"What, only two dollars?"

"Yes, padre. We were without luck all day."

"I have been without luck ever since I put you and your vagabonds into business! You idle my time. I scarce can keep you. How much did you and Cassi gain?"

"Seventy-five cents."

Camillo was angry. He shook Rosetta. "What! You are an idler! There is something wrong with you here of late. No matter—there is an end of it!" exclaimed Camillo, taking a seat in an old chair.

"End of what?" ventured Rosetta above her breath.

"Come to me, Rosetta!"

Rosetta approached curiously looking into Camillo's face; for upon his visage sat an indescribable something which from the first had aroused her apprehension.

"Are the instruments all in?"

"They are."

"Very well. You need not go out to-morrow, I have sold them."

"Sold them!" There was a pause. "Not my violin and mandolin also?" timidly inquired Rosetta.

"No, I have saved them, for I thought it best. But you shall not need them where you are going."

Rosetta was startled at Camillo's strange action. She was silent.

"Rosetta," finally spoke Camillo, "get ready all you wish to take with you. To-morrow is our last day in this city. Come, don't look that way. What! you have tears in your eyes!"

Rosetta's eyes were full, yet her voice was fairly under control.

"Padre, are we not doing well? I heard you tell Cassi we would all be rich some day!" exclaimed she with a perceptible struggle.

"Hark! I hear a noise upon the stair. Come, you must leave me. I have a visitor."

"Tell me," asked Rosetta trembling, "where, Padre, are we to go?"

"It should matter not to you, since you are well fed and clothed. And your wish cannot be satisfied at any rate. It matters not. God only knows where—perhaps to Italy. But hark! Mind you say nothing. I draw the money to-morrow. Come, hasten! Some one approaches. Listen!" They placed their hands to their heads but all was silent. Camillo, overwrought and excited, had false imaginings.

Soon Rosetta retired, though with sickened heart at the thought of this sudden eruption which was to sever at one blow the fond dreams which had linked her mind to the idol of her heart. As she advanced slowly into the hall which led to her room she halted and looked sadly back by times like one in whose heart all hopes have been crushed. Noticing this, Camillo ordered her off with a stamp of his impetuous foot. She retreated down the dingy hall and came to her own room. When she reached her bed she fell upon it

quivering, and wept. "Matters not! Why should it not concern me? Have I not made all of this fortune? Have I not followed him up and down the earth these ten years? I am well fed and clothed, therefore it should matter not where I am taken, nor what happens to me!" She buried her weeping face in her pillow. She lay there thinking—her crushed heart quivering and throbbing in agony.

Presently she heard noises in the hall or stairway. It was the expected visitor. She heard Camillo order him seated.

She listened and wondered. Suddenly she heard the latch of the door which led through the hall to her own room, being raised, and she divined that it was Camillo stealing in—perhaps to learn whether she had fallen asleep. She laid down and feigned slumber. She heard his tread soft and sly approach, and finally the dimly outlined face of Camillo peeped through her half open door and exclaimed in a low voice, "Rosetta!" She did not answer. He retired, and she heard the door close again, followed by the squeak of the bolts.

Assured that she was alone, and aroused by the strange act of Camillo, she arose from off the bed and stealthily crept to the hall. Looking down its dark, long way she saw the pencil-like gleam of light from the adjoining room falling through the key hole. She listened but heard nothing save indistinct mutterings. She crept closer. Long she stood trembling and breathing low, by times persuading herself that she had caught a word. Again she ventured closer but

could hear only an inarticulate murmur. Finally she became bold and proceeded to the door, but softly and almost breathlessly. The possibility of being detected gave her fears, and the knowledge of her guilty act was painful. She looked carefully through the key-hole, and her eyes fell upon the face of the stranger. It was the red beard and Celtic profile of Cavilazo. He was undoubtedly talking with Camillo, but the conversation though vehement and undoubtedly full of meaning, was incoherent and unintelligible to her. She strained every nerve to hear. She could catch only an isolated word now and then, which was spoken in Italian. By times as she glanced through the small aperture she saw the gestures of Camillo who seemed pleading earnestly with the stranger. She listened and looked but in vain! The conversation was too low. It was beyond her reach.

Finally overcome with waiting, and completely exhausted, she retired silently to her room, sat down upon her bed and began to muse. Yes, she had seen this same man. She had seen Cavilazo. He had been about the booth for several days; and she had learned from the wise little Bianco that Cavilazo had at one time been a close friend of the padre's but for some reason was an unwelcome guest. More than this. Cavilazo had business concerning Rosetta, so Bianco had thought, for Cavilazo mentioned her name. What could it be? Was it he who had driven Camillo into his intentions of moving? Why should the padre obey him? She ruminated and mused. Suddenly she was aroused by the sound of high words from the

lips of Cavilazo. Now was her time so she thought, and quickly tripping along the hall she again rested before the door. Placing her ear attentively to the aperture she caught the thread of the discourse and followed it with eagerness, now missing a phrase but grasping the idea till an intelligent conception of the conversation flashed upon her. She gasped when Cavilazo once pronounced her name. Indeed her frame quivered with apprehension. She scarcely breathed lest she should loose a syllable of that hot encounter of words, which like a serpent had charmed her.

Though the conversation was in Italian, Rosetta understood it perfectly. "You have forgotten the time when I pulled you from under the cannon and bore your wounded body into a safe retreat. You have forgotten all of Mexico. You recollect nothing of the brigantine. But you cannot forget that Rosetta who has made your fortune for you, you owe to me. And you are most ungrateful in your hour of plenty. But recollect it—there is much you wish kept hidden! A word to Rosetta would uproot you. I am not proof against it. I may be driven to forget past relations. For ten years our faces have not met and you have grown to believe with inward consolation that I, Cavilazo, were dead. I who keep the key to lock or unlock your life, I who may open the door and invite the eye of the law!"

So spake Cavilazo. And the mute Camillo—his swarthy face drawn down with the morose expressions of the moment—looked upon the floor in silence. Camillo's mind sped back over his past, the reminiscent

land of disappointment lighted only by lurid crime, which fading at the approach of conscience left only a blasted heath over which he felt creeping the chill night air of blighted ambition. Through the frightful ruins of his past life, not unlike the bird of night, did his memory find its way. Through the grewsome ruins did it flit about on bat-like wings; not remorsefully—for Camillo knew not remorse—but with that opposite element of the soul, a savage joy for that which he had, and an enkindled bitterness that his present life of thrift should be disturbed; that the bright sun of fortune which after so many years seemed rising from behind the craggy horizon of ill luck, should be threatened by an ill-omened cloud. It is certain he could have slain Cavilazo, had he felt the crime a safe one. But the convenience had not yet appeared. He only longed for an opportunity. Besides, Cavilazo sometimes casually placed his hand to the back of his coat collar, where Camillo knew there was concealed a bright stiletto.

"You would sell her? Very well, Cavilazo, but is she not young?"

"Not so young but that there will be jealousy among the bidders. She is well developed; a promising figure; knows nothing of her own secret origin; will always deem herself but that for which she has been sold, by blood a natural born slave, rescued for a time and preserved from her fate by Camillo the Italian, of whom she knows less than of herself."

"My God, my Rosetta! Cruel, cruel, Cavilazo!" Camillo's heart was writhing in agony.

"What, you a murderer and a conscience fearing coward to boot! It seems a strange mixture, to say the least! Oh, you have been absolved! Perhaps you keep a half dozen priests praying for you, since you can so well afford piety. You scruple to sell human flesh? Very well, I shall bear the responsibility. I have nothing to do with the act except so far as it brings me money. Camillo, it is not the act you fear but the loss, therefore mark it! It is my will! She is young as you say, granted! But she has warm life and affections. She is beautiful, can sing well, and she has passion; therefore she can be wooed, and the sale conducted in private."

"Cavilazo, I humble myself before you; for well do I know what you may do. I offer you a half of all that I have saved."

"I have counted on three thousand dollars. My arrangements are for this amount. I must have it. I have pointed the way. You will concede this or I shall hand you over to the courts. If you like, Rosetta shall stand for five hundred dollars; if not, you will make good the deficiency."

"Leave me till to-morrow at twelve Cavilazo, I beg you."

"I have said what I shall do. You may act upon it by morning."

"I have intimated that perhaps I would go away soon. You can take advantage of this and in my absence do as you think best with Rosetta. Cavilazo, I will make good the remainder, and Rosetta shall be sold for that price, though if you will give me a year I will pay you one thousand dollars in place of her."

"Perhaps I shall use her myself, but I think I prefer the proceeds of her sale in New Orleans; for there would be much risk in keeping Rosetta."

Rosetta stood aghast.

* * * * * *

Whilst thus the conversation between the Italians proceeded there was being enacted an episode which was soon to change the domestic economy of Camillo, and for a time at least frustrate the schemes of Cavilazo.

When Bianco arrived at home he found that he had been anticipated by Camillo, who suspecting that the party under his booth was no less than Bianco, had immediately closed business and proceeded with all haste homeward, hoping to reach there before news could possibly be taken to Rosetta. When Bianco arrived, by the merest chance he observed Camillo proceeding but a few steps in advance of him. Halting in concealment, after a time he observed Cavilazo following the footsteps of Camillo. The news which he had stolen he regarded as of the most supreme importance to Rosetta, and thus was he hastening with all speed to her. But now how would it be possible for him to gain her presence? There was but one door leading from the main hall to Camillo's apartments; and the first room was the one used by Camillo as sitting room and dining room; therefore he could not hope to reach her by that means. He advanced, however, creeping cautiously up the dark

stair-casing, ascending three flights, when at last he arrived upon the floor where Camillo lived. Stealing along the long hall he came to the door in time to catch most of the conversation which we have just related. Astonished and overwhelmed by the audacious villiany of Cavilazo and Camillo, he trembled to think of the utter helplessness of Rosetta, who must now be locked within her room. He passed quickly down the stair and made his way to the rear of the building, hoping that perhaps Rosetta could be seen upon the balcony. Three times in undertone he called to her. Alas, there was no response. Then he tossed a pebble upon the fixture; but no reply. She was perhaps locked within. If rescued at all it must be in haste. Powerless and with no means of gaining her presence, he was in a frenzy at the possible fate of his little friend. He thought of handing the affair over to the police, but looking about, his eyes chanced to alight upon the rear of the adjoining building, and he saw that the glass in the windows of the lower floor were shattered and some were missing.

Immediately he fashioned a scheme. He went up to the structure and by placing his hands on the lintel raised himself into the window. Looking into the dark interior he gave a low whistle to assure himself that the room was vacant. The noise came back with a hollow echo. To his right he discerned the faint outline of an old staircasing, then with assurance he leaped in. If his plans carried he would reach Rosetta.

About the time Bianco was gathering the last syllables which he had stolen through the key-hole from his

concealment in the hall, Rosetta who was oppressed with the frightful fate which she felt fastening upon her, stood aghast at her powerless position. She thought of the authorities, but there was no exit! She clutched at her breast and stood horror-stricken at that which she knew not how to avert. She glided to a door which she remembered led from one part of the hall to an adjoining room, into which she had never ventured—for it did not belong to Camillo's apartment—but which she thought possibly would lead to some means of escape or deliverance. She turned the knob. It was locked! Her heart leaped and fluttered like a wild bird in a cage. She rushed frantically into her own room and stood there quivering.

It was at this juncture that she fancied she heard a voice. She was not certain from whence it proceeded nor by whom spoken. She breathed low and listened. It was repeated. Through the dull darkness of the hall it called, "Rosetta!" scarcely above a whisper. "Rosetta!" again repeated the voice. She stole to her door and looked. "Rosetta!" again came the whisper, and she gasped with afright whilst her eyes distended vainly upon the dark. "Rosetta, I am Cassi, don't be scared!" She looked quickly up and saw a head at the narrow scuttle which led to the loft. It was certainly Bianco's, and yet was it? His eyes glared like those of a cat in the dark opening. She attempted to make reply, but the words could not be forced. His inexplicable presence was a shock, and for a moment paralyzed her speech.

"Don't be frightened, Rosetta, I am Cassi—but I have come to tell you something which *will* frighten you," exclaimed Bianco in a whisper.

"Oh, Cassi, how did you get there? You almost killed me."

"It was the only way; and it is the only way you can hope to get out. Come, we must not talk till you are up here, then I will tell you."

At this Bianco disappeared, but in another moment Rosetta saw descending through the scuttle the end of a small ladder. Slowly and without noise it finally descended and rested upon the floor. She grasped the rounds and sped upward like a squirrel and passed into the loft. Grasping Cassi Bianco's hand she was led to an opening in the roof through which both made their exit into the open air; having first withdrawn the ladder from the vacant room and laid it carefully down within the loft where Bianco had found it.

They came out upon the flat roof over which the moon-beams were playing. Rosetta's luxuriant hair had fallen in disheveled strands over her shoulders and breast. Like a vice she clung to the arm of her deliverer, the daring, romantic Bianco. The tears of fear stood in Rosetta's eyes. Bianco silently replaced the small covering to the oblong opening in the roof through which they had emerged into the air.

"Rosetta, do you recollect the stranger I have spoken of—Cavilazo is his name?"

"Yes, Cassi," answered Rosetta, quivering.

"He has come to take you away. Camillo has given you to him and you are to be sold at New Orleans into slavery."

"I know it, Bianco. I heard them talking of me, and I was almost mad till I heard your voice and knew you had come to save me."

Had the crown of Italy alighted at that moment upon the brow of Bianco he could not have felt himself more a Prince. For a moment they glanced about over the dark, flat roofs of the neighborhood, noting here and there a sentinel-like chimney keeping watch in that moonlight realm of graveled roofs and fire walls. In the western sky there was an accumulation of tumbled clouds, but the light from the eastern sky was a vast hemisphere of stars. A meteor flashed along the horizon and died into the blue abyss. Below in the streets they heard the distant rumble of vehicles upon the paving stones, and at intervals arose the cry of a street urchin. Bianco leaped down upon the roof of the building through which he had ascended to the rescue, and extending his strong arms to Rosetta assisted her after him. He then led Rosetta to the scuttle in the roof. They descended and wound about through the unoccupied rooms, Bianco leading the way. After a time they found themselves at the window casement through which Bianco had first entered.

"Stop! Cassi," suddenly exclaimed Rosetta, grasping his arm and looking him in the face, "I have forgotten my instruments!"

The thought of this almost paralyzed Rosetta. Bianco looked about in perplexity. Finally he exclaimed, "Come!" and soon they had descended upon the ground and disappeared in the darkness.

During this episode Camillo had been very busily engaged in settling his disagreeable account with Cavilazo. When the plans had been about completed Bianco suddenly opened the door and walked in. In his hand he playfully tossed a large knife, the blade of which was open. Camillo looked at him but said nothing. For the moment the spirit of the brigand had entered the breast of Cassi Bianco. He had come to get the instruments by strategy if possible, or by force if necessary. In a few moments more he had swung the harp over his shoulder, and picking up the best violin he started for the door.

"Where are you going?" questioned Camillo, arising.

"To play for some people."

"Where?"

"Where Rosetta and I played last week."

"Then Rosetta should go with you." Camillo opened a door and called aloud for Rosetta.

"Tell her I will wait at the foot of the stairs," exclaimed Bianco, and he started for the outer door.

"Bianco, stop!" exclaimed Camillo. "I want Rosetta to go with you."

Cassi Bianco's frown was instantaneous as his eyes fixed themselves upon Camillo.

Immediately Cavilazo seeing there was a question at issue, arose and cautiously walked between Bianco and the door.

Camillo awaited some time in the silence, but Rosetta not appearing he advanced toward her room.

"Rosetta!" exclaimed he in wrath, as he passed down the inner hall.

Bianco started for the door, but seeing the strong form of Cavilazo like a sentinel firmly fixed before him he halted, looking him squarely in the eyes to read his meaning. In a moment he removed the harp from his shoulder and sat it upon the floor near him. At this he looked about, for Camillo had returned.

Camillo's dark, rough skin had turned to a saffron hue.

"What's the matter?" exclaimed Cavilazo.

"Rosetta is not here!" gasped Camillo.

"It's a lie!" fiercely exclaimed Cavilazo, at the same time drawing his stiletto—"Oh, Camillo, you can't trick me!"

Camillo stood erect and defiant. Blood began to return to his swarthy face. The dim light twinkled upon the small gold hoops in his ears. Fear was a stranger to Camillo's breast. His nostrils now slightly quivered and his clinched teeth perceptibly outlined themselves between his thin lips as his eyes glittered upon the stiletto and finally fixed themselves upon the eyes of Cavilazo. There was a momentary silence, at the end of which Camillo's eyes instantly—as if by the lightning of intuition—flashed upon the face of Bianco. "Wretch! thief!" cried he through his teeth—"tell me where my Rosetta is!" He rushed at Bianco and clutched him fiercely by the throat.

"Infamous trickster—diable Camillo!" wrathfully cried Cavilazo, with his stiletto poised in the air. Instantly all three had clinched. There was a struggle which led half way across the room. The wrist of

Cavilazo was caught in the vice-like grasp of Camillo, and the stiletto became momentarily powerless. Bianco was in some way entangled between these two terrible men.

"For God's sake, release me!" presently gurgled Cavilazo, wrenching his throat from the grasp of Camillo. "Bianco will murder us both—he has a knife!" But Camillo's hand was fixed around the wrist that it held, like a cold rigid casting of lead. Both, however, were equally eager to get rid of this scorpion, and presently Bianco emerged from the fray. Grasping his harp and violin, he disappeared through the outer door.

"Come! let us not kill each other like dogs," finally exclaimed Cavilazo, "there is evidently some terrible mistake!" At this, he courageously hurled the stiletto to the far end of the room. Camillo instantly released his grasp and stepped back—but stood poised like a tiger ready to spring.

There was silence. In a moment more Bianco had gained the street and was gone.

Here and there upon the floor appeared small spots of blood.

"Cavilazo!" at length spake Camillo, "I tell you again the girl has gone, and I know not when or how!" Both men looked into each others faces with mutual amazement. Presently Cavilazo unbuttoned his vest and tore open his shirt. Upon his breast were the dripping gashes made by Bianco's knife. He felt a dizziness. He sat down heavily in a chair and leaned fainting and blind upon the table. After

some moments, reviving, he slowly raised his head. "Camillo!" weakly cried he. Camillo had gone! The light was out, and intense darkness in the room. The wild eyes of Cavilazo glanced here and there upon the inky space before him—"Camillo!" cried he, as he awakened to these facts. "Camillo!" yelled he again, arising with his bloody handkerchief pressed to his wounds, and frantically feeling his way in the darkness. "Monstrous murderer! he has left me here to bleed and die. Camillo!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

TWO FORTUNES.

IT was not long till the affairs of Camillo were well known to the public. His fruit booth had changed hands as if by magic, and Camillo himself had suddenly disappeared. Cavilazo was still alive, for his handsome form was frequently seen about the markets, theatres and public lounging places. Cavilazo's native shrewdness and years of experience in America had polished his speech and manners. To the eyes of the casual observer he had the appearance of a retired trader. He dressed well and lived without labor. Except to the experienced ear his language was entirely free from foreign idiom.

As to Rosetta, her experience in the next few months, although of the most important character to her future career was not such as to require a detailed rehearsal. She had always been an object of solicitude in the minds of certain good people who knew of her. Her misfortunes now evoked their particular aid.

Thus it was that Rosetta one day found herself seated in a great parlor answering the questions of several kind ladies, who, scarcely realizable to herself, were displaying much interest for her welfare. They were not only searching out every fibre of her past career but they were projecting beautiful plans for her future! Rosetta listened and wondered, for she did not know that such kind people lived. When finally one of the ladies addressed her, "Rosetta, we think you are greatly in need of our protection." Rosetta felt her heart start in her breast. Then the lady continued: "If you wish, you may live with me for a time. I have no children Rosetta, and can easily care for you and train you in things all good women should know." Rosetta made an attempt to reply, but tears filled her eyes. The kind lady did not wait for Rosetta's words, but realizing the girl's gratitude, motherly clasped her to her breast and kissed her tenderly.

Thus had Rosetta come to a turning point in life. The lady who had thus interested herself in Rosetta was Mrs. Dr. North—Margaret, whose own childhood career had seen such suffering; for in such soil is the tender flower of human sympathy born.

Mrs. North had no children of her own. Nature had denied her. Children are the blessing as they are the fruitage of marital life. Their absence to that household had been the fountain of much secret sorrow.

Maternal love, that ever present spark of woman—that latent instinct which in the absence of children on whom to lavish its affection, burns into the aching

heart itself—burned unquenched in the heart of Mrs. North, her affections more keen from their long denial.

"What rapture in the kiss of children!" sadly exclaimed she. "To hear them laugh and make the first vain struggle at the most high of human achievements, the moulding of words from the molten forge of their blazing little souls. Ah, yes! Even to wipe from their fretted cheek the strolling tear; to hover angel-like above their couch of prostrating fever; to lead and direct their unskilled attempts; to watch and wait for the first beam of their enkindling minds. How delightful to project into the dim ether of to-morrow the exalted hope! To dream of the probabilities; to fashion the castle; to survey the problematic future; to erect the defending barrier against fearful contingency; to sweep with a glance the sea of life ere yet the sail be set!"

Around the life of Rosetta clung a mystery, awakening the most profound curiosity. She was an orphan, therefore was she pitied? She was beautiful, and therefore was she adored? She possessed both composure and brightness of intellect, and therefore was she admired? Mrs. North looked into her eyes which Cassi had called "deep wells" in his admirable fashion, and there she saw the child's gratitude gleaming through the mists. She clasped the pretty head in her arms and wept. The dream of life had idealized in Rosetta.

The future of Rosetta's life spread out before Mrs. North. She felt a renewal of life at the grand responsibility thrust upon her. The successive steps to be

taken in the final development of that promising girl quickly foreshadowed themselves to her prophetic mind. The schools, the musicals, the balls, the church, the entertainments, the fetes, the society, the gaiety; yea the lovers and a thousand other details of life. Through such a gallery did her imagination take Rosetta. In Mrs. North, Rosetta the orphan had found a mother, and that mother, a child; and in all Dr. North saw new charms for life. Time moved on. It was ever happiness to think of what they had done. Life had declared in their favor. A great sunburst of joy o'er spread them. The Doctor came home from his patients, and it was, "where is Rosetta?" When he went forth to his duties it was, "kiss me good bye, my daughter." And so the glad, new life began—the woof of each day's action woven full with this new thread of gold.

Rosetta was bewildered. It was like a dream—so unreal was all things. Awakened in the mornings by the reflection of the sun upon the gold-hued paper which adorned the walls of her room, or dashed by sunny beams from off the hanging pictures, she would startle and rub her brow to brush away the fog of indecision, like one under a spell of enchantment. The delicious sensation of domestic solitude, the silent movements of Dr. North pursuing throughout the week his many professional duties; the callers who came in handsome liveries to visit Mrs. North were of course all new and strange to Rosetta, and each passing incident left a permanent impression on her fertile mind. Rosetta was placed in school, and every

advantage was given her for intellectual training and social polish. In this way four wonderful years glided by. During this time the duskiness of Rosetta's cheeks, the warm imprints of the sun, had gradually faded into fairness, leaving however the red tinge of health more defined and delicate. Rosetta had grown tall and shapely. Her auburn hair had become longer and more luxurious. Her eyes had grown softer and deeper. Her Greek cast of head and face had always made her handsome, but she was now beautiful. During this time Rosetta had also become famous for her magical vocal powers, and she was sought for as are all bright and beautiful people.

Cassi Bianco had not been without his fortune either. On the day following Rosetta's escape Bianco boldly passed by Camillo's booth. The padrone was not there! Little Creta was in charge. This was astonishing to Bianco. He must investigate. Creta clapped her hands for joy. "Cassi, I have been watching for you all day. Here Cassi, are the keys which padre says you must keep till he returns. And you are to buy and sell and take care of the money!"

Bianco first looked doubtful into Creta's Italian eyes, then putting the keys into his pocket he secreted his violin behind a case of oranges, seated himself on Camillo's old stool and began to ponder.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A SKETCH OF THOSE TIMES.

SINCE the hour of Rosetta's escape, four years have now rolled by, and the hour for new developments in the Mystery of Louise Pollard has arrived.

Maurice Severgn was seated in his library where he had been the greater part of the afternoon. A volume of Descartes lay upon the center table. It was opened at a page, the contents of which he had finished a few moments previous. An old map of the United States hung upon the wall. Upon this Severgn had been some time dreaming. It was an outline of the Republic such as it was just after the war with Mexico; the provinces of that conquered power being represented upon its many colored face as prospective states of the thriving Union.

The tea bell having rung, Severgn replaced the volume among its fellows in an honored place among his loved philosophers of which he possessed a goodly plenty. After glancing about the room and over the many tiers of books, histories, biographies, sciences, books of travel, fictions, poets, etc., etc., which lined the walls of the *great* room of rooms in the Severgn mansion, Severgn came into the dining room below where he found Madam waiting.

It was a beautiful May evening, and the scented foliage, which for the last few weeks had been faithfully putting on the green robe of spring, sent forth a

pleasant fragrance; for the home of the Severgns was a stately edifice set in a perfect bower of elms and cedars etc., fringed with a variety of small shrubs. After a day of intermittent clouds, the last rays of the setting sun showered down upon the city, glinting on steeple and window-pane. Falling through a window of various stained glass the sun-beams diffused themselves softly throughout the dining room and sparkled upon the silver of the table.

"You had some trouble with Belshazzer this morning?" inquired Madam as they both sat down at the table.

"Not trouble, mother," answered Maurice as he arranged his napkin and prepared to take a slice of bread, to which a pretty slave octaroon was assisting him. "Not trouble. I wish only to teach that fellow the royal prerogative of a free spirit—which attaches to the ancient splendor of his name," added Maurice slightly in levity. "I want him to learn self-respect independence and self-assertion—not arrogance—but greater dignity of bearing."

"Ah, my queer, generous boy, your charity extending as it does to these creatures is truly magnanimous, but dear Maurice you can as well change Belshazzar's color as teach him all you strive for. I, too, have a heart for the poor things, but I show it in a different way. They most need guidance and judicious correction; they are as children without minds, truly to be pitied, guided and directed. The blood of Africa can never be leavened with the spirit of the Teuton. It is sterile of that condition. Oh, perhaps after ages of

continuous and uninterrupted development as your evolutionists say—"

"But I have noticed the spark of freedom in many," answered Maurice. "Belshazzar was happy the day I handed him his manumission, and I can't believe but that he has progressed some too. I observe it in his step, his gait and in his salutations to others. I tell him he shall not crawl in dust before any human being; that he shall look up and walk firmly. They are a weak race and coercion has brought them lower. I am sorry to recall that I ever held other doctrine than this."

"It is a magnanimous spirit, Maurice, but in this case slightly misdirected. You waste your time on them. They are willing slaves. Otherwise how could they have submitted so long and faithfully? Why does not our Martha and our Jacob cross the line and flee to Canada? Why do they not take their freedom? Have I not offered each of them their papers and told them, if so they chose they were at liberty to go to the land of their choice? Why does Jenny cling to us? A child of *Teuton* as well as African extraction; loves music, can sing sweetly; is as beautiful as any maid I have ever seen; a face of perfect contour, warm and beautiful in color; but God pity her, slightly tinted with the fatal pigment! 'No,' they say, 'we are free as we can hope to be in all the world, and we want to serve Madam.' And is not this the prevailing sentiment all over the land? Wherever they are treated humane they would fight and die for the being who enslaves them, and who they can only look to as the

future master of their children. Israel by Babel's shore wept as did they also in Egypt; but in America the tear of the slave has become a jubilee! True, the maltreated rebel, but that is but the animal instinct of self-preservation. They are born slaves! Do not mistake me, Maurice dear! I truly pity the being whose only natural legacy is the yoke of bondage. It is a horrible malediction scarcely explainable, and yet it is unquestionably true."

"Ah, poor things!" sighed Maurice glancing upon the face of the octaroon girl who had just returned from the kitchen with a dish of steaming potatoes, "on the whole it is a miserable fate!" The slave returned the glance with an expression of unmistakable intuition of the moment, then bent faithfully to her task. The sunlight glimmered upon the large gold hoops which adorned her ears and fell softly across her face, revealing that beauty whose exquisite texture in so many cases had made many a less fortunate owner in those days the target of fowlest outrage.

"But I fear we shall pay for it in blood! The yoke must some day crumble; and before long!" exclaimed Maurice after a few moment's silence during which they had both been eating whilst thinking of what had just passed.

"Fanaticism will only pin the yoke more stubbornly to the neck, Maurice. The South will not give up so valuable a possession without resistance. Abolition at all hazards, is rebellious against the order of the government and should be suppressed."

"I have long promoted the theory of colonization, through the papers for which I contribute; but secretly, let me say I fear there can never be colonization. Already as a matter of fact war has been waging for several years. I fear Kansas and Missouri will some day see themselves duplicated on a ten thousand fold ration. Do you observe the clamor against 'the Dred Scott decision?' when people will no longer revere the edicts of the most solemn tribunal of the land there is time for much fearful apprehension. Already the crisis has seen a prophet in the person of John Brown. Fanaticism of the North has met fanaticism of the South at Harper's Ferry. Beings of less consequence than Brown have heralded great revolutions. Already the more rank abolition journals point to him as a martyr. It is my opinion that the authorities acted very unwisely—considering the heated condition of affairs—to put Brown to death. However so much he deserved death, their act cannot be looked upon by the fanatical as but an example of brutality. I venture to say since my return from the South—if worse does come to worse—that his death will become the war cry upon many a bloody field." Then lowering his voice Severgn continued. "I cannot believe that the brutal indifference with which the slave dealer separates husband from wife, and child from mother, can much longer be endured by those whose associations of life have not enured them to such scenes. It can't be possible that this antagonism, daily becoming more defined *geographically*, can maintain within a common government. The South to-day would

secede if she thought she could without blood-shed. And she may attempt it as did South Carolina, and as once did Massachusetts, if she is pushed to the brink. I had been studying the map when I heard the bell, and reflecting upon these things—and many more of which we have so many times spoken—I trembled with an intuition of the coming conflict as I glanced along that line marking the course of the Ohio. It is an awful state of things which has finally been conceived by the American People!"

"Maurice," interrupted Madam, "what has become of the slave you so rashly defended last week? I should have thought the moral opprobium attached to deeds of that kind would have warned you from any such undertaking. The act was truly magnanimous, but in it you risked the reputation of a life."

Severgn's face slightly flushed—"Mother, hark—here is his story. He was the same black whom I once told you I had seen swimming the Ohio River. Yes, it was Vulcan. After some four years he had been again recaptured at Detroit, having been decoyed across from Canada. He had been bound and thrown like an animal for the slaughter into an old vehicle prepared for the occasion and hastened away. They had been on the road several nights and days; little food was provided. After many days they arrived, exhausted and half dead with hungar. In this condition Vulcan had been brought into court—the chains still fastened to him. As he raised his head and looked sadly about for signs of human mercy, he met the cold and pitiless gaze of the bystanders, and

again his head fell and his eyes rested upon the chains that bound him.

"God deliver us from such a fate! A vision arose before me. I thought of the slave-pen, the post, the block, the chains, the sugar mills of Louisiana, the cotton fields of Texas, the loathsome negro hut, the daily pittance of the slave's life. I heard the cries of sisters, the pitiful sobbings of old men, the supplications of mothers; yea, the frightful pageantry of the entire system in its horrible detail passed before my sight; and trembling with a horrible inspiration of the moment I stepped forward and begged the court—who was to pass sentence after the farce was played—'what if the prisoner at the bar be a free man?' Of course I met but the frown of that being who stands for justice, and there was a silence. I thought of the opprobrium of which you speak, but mother I felt more keenly the grief of the slave when in response to my voice he bent his eyes for a moment upon me."

"Ah, well dear son, I don't know but you did right after all; but you know what the world thinks of people who defend negroes. They can not hope to gain recognition from the better classes. But I am proud of your courage—fearless to speak for the downtrodden even in the face of such prejudice!"

"This morning in the jail I heard Vulcan's story entirely through," continued Maurice. "He had been legally manumitted in the State of South Carolina, where he had paid the sum of fourteen hundred dollars for the privileges of a freeman. After this he had spent a few years working at his trade as a blacksmith

at Savannah. He had amassed some property and started for Georgia, where he says he went to buy the freedom of an only sister. That when en-route he was suddenly set upon by armed men, who gagged and pinioned him and carried him away. His manumission papers were destroyed and his money—some eight hundred dollars in all—taken from him, then he himself was handed over to others who took him to a slave auction. There, despite all entreaty, he was again sold into slavery—that he escaped and for a time lurked in the East Tennessee mountains and finally found his way to the North. And here it was that his story became interesting to me, and will be equally so to you. Believing much in his story and desiring to sift it out, I offered my personal bond for his return to court, and prayed the court for a few days that I might send to Savannah and search the records for evidence of his manumission. This prayer was utterly ignored, and the slave given into the custody of the claimant."

"What has become of him?" inquired Madam Severgn.

"He has been taken south with some twenty others. This morning I gained a moment's conversation with him upon the false plea of a desire to purchase him from his master. In that conversation I have learned a few of the strangest things that possibly could be well imagined. In fact the whole affair has so filled my mind that I have not gotten away from it since that time, and I meant to unfold it to you as soon as opportunity offered. In this interview I first

recalled to him the meeting we had near the bluff at the hour he was accidentally first seen by me. He had forgotten my face, for he said I had changed very much. I had grown a mustache. But suddenly the entire episode flashed upon him and he grew confident and spoke freely. I inquired into his past history. He said he had always been known simply as 'Vulcan'—a very appropriate name considering his calling in life and his uncommon strength, as he is a giant. His first master was a cotton merchant in Savannah, whose name was Pollard." Here Maurice halted to read the effect of this revelation.

"Pollard!" exclaimed Madam Severgn doubtfully, for she was completely aroused.

"Yes, Pollard, but this was not all," answered Maurice. "Tell me something of this Pollard and his family asked I. For a moment the slave looked into my eyes in a questioning sort of way which I did not understand, but which heightened my anxiety. He told me there we two brothers of them, 'James and William,' said he after a pause. Yes, answered I with assumed indifference. Both brothers were in the cotton business he said. Were they an old family of the city of Savannah? asked I. 'They were,' he replied. I have no particular object in inquiring into these relations, said I. He then told me that James was kind enough to grant him his freedom after paying for it in extra work, which lasted through the nights and odd hours of seven years.

"What became of each of them? asked I. 'Both are now dead,' answered the slave. 'James died

suddenly and William is supposed to have died of grief.'

"Grief! thought I, and yet dared not show the least sign of anxiety. Did William have any serious loss? asked I casually, whilst I evaded the sharp and strange glance of his eyes, for I knew there was something which he did not wish to relate. 'Yes, a sorrow,' answered he, hanging his head in meditation as if recalling the whole affair. 'Poor Maser William, poor Maser William! It was a dark day for him when the news came. You see he married when away off in Verginny, and deys great deal of trouble, though no one suspecten but what she was a lady. Poor Louise! Poor, poor Mistus! When he heard that she'd guine away Masser William, he just 'peared to sink right down.'

"For a moment my struggles stifled my words, and a thousand different anxieties arose. What became of Louise, his wife, asked I—forstalling the name of William Pollard's wife with assurance; for the hint had been sufficient. The slave answered my remark with silence. What became of her? again I enquired, perhaps revealing the emotion which now possessed me.

"'Well Masser,' entreated the poor fellow with a look of grief in his face, 'please don't be inquiren too far—but den I 'spose its all over in all dese years slippen by. She went away, and Masser William he died of a broken heart, as dey all says.'

"Did she ever return? asked I. There was no response, but there was something in that face,

though black and that of a slave, which made me halt. I then reached down for this locket, sprung the catch and held the picture before him. My eyes were riveted upon him, and I marked every motion and slightest change. For a moment he gazed upon the picture, then suddenly turned to me, his face wearing an expression of profound astonishment. 'Who be you?' he inquired. Severgn is my name, replied I. This somewhat quieted him, and casting his eyes upon the ground he gave a deep sigh. At this the loud voice of the dealer was heard, and in a few moments more Vulcan was hastened along among his fellows who were all manacled to the same chain. I followed him a few steps but in vain, for he was soon lost to view. I then spoke further with the dealer, but there was no time to parley, for the boat had already moved slightly from the mooring, and was making haste to depart. I then secured Vulcan's number and requested that a record be kept of his disposal, and as I have the address of the dealer it is likely that in the future I may learn of his whereabouts."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MAURICE SEVERGN.

AFTER a few weeks, Rose Cimarron's father began gradually to impart to me the business I was to transact in the West. During this time Rose's admiration for the character of Maurice Severgn had become very pronounced. Every detail of his student life was of interest to her. However only a brief sketch of our rather lengthy discussions upon this phase of his character can here be related, although they were the source of my keenest enjoyment during our long and pleasant drives, in which we indulged as my days of convalescence wore on.

* * * * * * *

Although Maurice Severgn was an intellectual voluptuary, a very prodigy of learning for one of his years, it must not be presumed that he omitted any of those habits of life which are vital to a healthy, physical organism. He enjoyed long walks and drives, amusements and exercises of the muscles. He labored for hours among the shrubs, vines, trees and rare floral displays of his home. His laboratory, being a vast private shop of chemicals and mechanical appliances, also called forth at times laborious exercise, bringing into play every nerve and fibre. Severgn's physical development was therefore of no ordinary character. As his hygienic customs were most rigidly

observed his vigor of body was insured. He was therefore also a beautiful specimen of physical manhood.

His character however possessed one weakness—the phase of which is more or less pronounced in all students, namely, the love of knowledge solely for the rapture he experienced in its daily acquisition. But the thinkers and students of the Nineteenth Century are not apt to become recluses and impractical scholastics. So intensely practical is the atmosphere of this modern age, and so essentially permeated with the scientific have all things become, that there is nothing within the reach of the human mind but that there is a call for it by modern society.

Except in particular cases however where chance had spied out the authorship of a few venturesome discussions written for a popular periodical of the times, the power of Severgn's intellect had not as yet been felt. His genius here and there had begun to sparkle. Would it ever glow? Heaven spare him! Must those silvery dreams ever fade? Must that exalted nature ever bend?

It is with trepidation that we advance to the truth! Before us in the dawn of this new life are the elements of a storm. When shall that tempest break which for so long had been gathering about him? Shall the pine be withered by the lightning's blast, be uprooted by the tornado, or shall it stand unshattered and firm? In the lightnings which shall play about his head, perhaps we may read the legend of Louise, glimmering in the fatal clouds. However, let us proceed.

Madam Severgn herself was a rare being, and in the growth of Maurice she had spent her uncommon energies. It was with wisely directed eyes that Maurice had looked upon nature. The practical with the idealistic had been judiciously mingled. He had visited many climes and countries. He knew in a general manner, by practical association, many people. He had been within every metropolis of Europe. He had bent his ear to the music and the drama of Paris, Berlin, London and Vienna. Their galleries were lingering pictures within his brain. They were the garniture of many of his dreams.

During the entire course of his life however he had felt an unquenchable thirst for philosophy and the natural sciences. This phase of his nature grew to an uncontrollable passion in Berlin, where he had been fascinated by the enchanting lectures of Hegel.

How limitless in space, how beginingless in time was that vast book into which he had for the past several years been looking—the book of all profound nature! Before its unnumbered pages he felt himself but as a lisping child.

Would the primer of nature be e'er passed by him? pondered Maurice when upon the immensity of his task he looked. Yea, task so voluptuously sweet that life could not stretch out to that day when it should become an irksome duty to continue his survey of nature. "Vast book of nature!" exclaimed he. "We look upon thy multitudinous leaves, thy pictured folios, thy pageantry of life and death, thy ceaseless coming in and going out of existence, thy whence and

thy whither until mind itself be choaked and clogged with the immensity of thy unravelable wonderment! Nature! sublime sea of limitless expanse, thy serf beats upon the Eternal! Look we for thy horizon? It is a phantom, moving as we move. Stand we beside thee, and the uncovered brow of reverence is shadowed by thy presence mysterious. Think we of thee!—it is to resolve into dreams and meditation before the awful pageantry of things, whilst by the soul sweep the queer faces of thy limitless ages, thy eras vast, where the years are but the click of thy pendulum in the stupendous machinery of matter! The hard fought battle of human life, man's ills, his happiness, his fondest hope, scarce can claim the brevity of one poor hair's mark upon thy infinite dial. He who seeks thy mystery seeks that which he shall n'er find; but thy sea shall moan to him its everlasting dirge; the stars shall whisper their love; each hill and vale shall yield their legend, and the countless tongues of earth shall breathe a music in the ear; and life shall be well spent, though uncrowned."

Severgn had begun to rightly measure the limitless field before him. He had provided himself with maps and charts and books. He had purchased and gathered together an uncommon treasury of natural specimens. He possessed a laboratory equipped with the most approved instruments of his time, several of which he had collected in France and Germany. Earnestly and heroically had he begun the work of life.

Appreciating that the mind should not be clogged with a solitary occupation of any kind, be it ever so

pleasant, for diversion he devoted many hours to history, and being a lover of art he cheerfully took to music and the drama as a recuperative element in his life's regime.

Thus had this life begun; how should it end? Perhaps after many years of research, a new philosophy should be expounded. Should he be crowned as the sage or must that light go out in one awful eclipse?

Being quite reclusive he was at this young age misunderstood by the world. Already that veil which settles about the life of the student had begun to drop about Severgn. Public inquiry pricked up its ears but could hear nothing. Speculation was set afloat but could arrive at no fixed conclusion. The handsome form of Maurice Severgn as it passed in and out of that silent mansion became a study, until one day the public were awakened to the truth. They had called the mansion a useless collection of dead and meaningless relics. They wondered at that antiquated store house, those nameless relics and stony formations; those weapons of bronze and stone, those rocks and minerals, those charts and maps—"Why sleep they in their dust? Is the world wiser or better for these dead things?"

Vain, vain speculation. Within those labyrinthian deposits there presided a genius; a spirit, wrapped in the mystic robe of the seemingly occult, who in silence paid them visits and in the hour of devotion came to them as the devotee to his shrine; came to them, those fossil children of the past, those embalmed relics of life when all else slept—when the solemn

doors were closed against the boisterous hum of the worldlings; came to them, the departed, stood by them as the aged pine among the tombs holding strange converse with the murmuring air and sable shade, the tombs and lamps of night; came to them and talked with them across the lapse of time.

"For the student there is no death," once remarked Severgn. "All is a moving ever changing condition. The seeming grave yards of eternity pour forth their everlasting legends. The fossil is frantic with the long ages of its voiceless tomb. Hark! Is there not a ceaseless whispering, up-pouring from the vast realm of earth? Awful has been the struggle! Tremendous and unthinkably sublime that passage from life to death and back again to life! Is there not a voice in the vale of labyrinthian time, a whisper when the breeze is low and sways the sighing leaf, when spring treads blushing o'er the hill, when autumn breaks golden o'er the globe, when night winds sigh hear you not a strange music as of many voices, dim, distant, plaintive, unutterably sublime breaking upon the mystic ear of thought? Oh, children of the past! ye who peopled the earth long ago, whose numberless sepulchres, cemented and conjoined have built the continents and separated the waters of the seas, how quite important are ye in the masonry of the earth, how equally exalted were your lives to the vaunting estate of man! Time—the awful iconoclast, who touches as with a fatal wand the magnificent fabrics of an eon whilst vast kingdoms fall in ruin, and says to the Silurian, you lie here, and the Devonian, you

lie here, and to the Reptilian and also to man, this throughout all enduring time thy grave shall be, kills not the soul; nay, rends not the womb of his own existence. But each particular creature leaving its ruin, sad as it may seem, upon the infinite beach—as some broken hulk deserted where beats the billows or glides the arctic gorge—he forthwith transfuses into new life."

From out the cataclysms of nature came forth these legends of earth to Severgn. It was the story of an infinite force in its sportive creations and destructions amidst hopeless matter. Thence, the voice he heard moaning eternally throughout all time as tolls the sad notes of the buoy-bell when storm rides the wave. This, the whisper he heard, the everlasting legend of nature plaintively singing in rock and tree and the deeply dark strata of earth as sang ancient Pan in the bows of the forest.

Yet to him what infinite procession their lives revealed! Where now rolled the hills in green had stood fathoms of water. Mingling with the roots of the grass lay the numberless sepulchres of a host of vanished life. "Whither has gone the force which in ages past peopled those stony tenements? Whence and where now the being who peeped from this shell?" Thus he questioned and dreamed.

Was it strange, that Severgn, when bending his ear upon the seeming silence of the inanimate, heard there a voice of unutterable plaintiveness? Before the wearied story of nature he stood enchanted. Before its great truths he felt his soul enthralled and fixed

in awe. From the deeply dark and mysterious past came a voice as from a grave. He listened—and within the machinery of matter, he seemed to hear the hum of its tremendous wheels!

At intervals the curtain which hung between him and the sublime drama of nature seemed to rise; but it was for a moment—a glimpse, and the darkness which lies beyond again closed down upon the stage, that infinite board whereon is played the tragedy of matter and the farce of man.

No, this strange collection lay not in dust and idleness. This mansion was the camping ground of a great student—Maurice Severgn.

The world as yet had not made his acquaintanceship. A peculiar sanctity hedged about those antediluvian and pre-historic reliquaries, but in their midst walked by times a being who knew their names and listened with reverend ear to the story of the tiniest creature and humblest form among them.

How strange the calm, prevading such repositories! How still the speechless fossil! How seeming dumb the stone, and voiceless the mineral! How composed that piece of pottery; this bone awl; this flint point; this ax of granite; this weapon of bronze! How curtained the sleep of the mummied relics! How *profound* their sleep! Cautiously among them we glide about as though walking amid forgotten graves; lest a careless tread may disturb the repose of the silent dead! If perchance we speak, it is with reverential whisper. Should some stray piece of ancient vace, some lugubrious fossil be touched by gliding fold of skirt, or

awkward hand, the offended image falls to the floor and a voice like that of thunder roars upon the affrighted air.

Whence the pervasive solitude of such repositories; this silent and introspective awe ; this mysterious calm which comes o'er our spirits ; this twilight-broken gloom, whilst from unseen lips ushers an echoless hush? It is the spirit of nature's ancient crypt stealing o'er us. Within those ubiquitious pulsations our silence is involuntary. We feel an humility in our hearts—within the conscious vastness of things, we feel an awe! The planet upon which we live becomes but a grain of sand ; our hearts pulse, but the puppet's valve in action ; our bodies and our minds, but complex machines driven irresistibly by a mysterious force not more exalted or divine in consistency than that which opens and closes the lids of the bivalve upon the sea beach. We look out upon space. It is vast ; it is measureless! We know our own insignificance, and our spirit shrinks within us as we feel a sense unspeakable. Words fall powerless from our lips ; we can only stand in awe, for within us is the birth of reverence before the majestic. We sink into a trance of devotion at the shrine of profundity—the only idolatry worthy of man. We look upon the suns, planets and satellites, and through the vista of ages see slowly arising and accumulating the strata of the earth. We mark the advent of life, vegetable and animal ; we view the rise of man, his struggle with elemental nature, his struggle with fierce beasts, his wars, his triumphs, his defeats, his trial at govern-

ments, his failures, his vanities and sorrows; the rise of religion and superstition, the increasing triumph of mind over tremendous odds, the rise of art, the first appearance of the smith, the mason, the birth of cities, their destruction, the stages of civilization and their climaxes, and finally the dust of decay, which triumphing over all, hides and destroys the fondest works of man, until the foot prints of his most exalted undertaking are hidden in chaotic sand. Alas! we hold our hands to the sky and cry aloud for more light, for that delirious something, the touch of which translates our being. We feel our body needs neither meat nor raiment, we open the windows and very sky-lights of our soul and inebriate ourselves with the divine essence of wisdom. In the midst of these things we maintain a silence; and breathless at our ears our spirit waits to catch the waves of truth. Be we but coarse clay, no sound comes forth from the seemingly dead images about us. We go forth into the day and raise a clatter about so many pieces of stone, such and such meaningless names.

But, Oh! how different to him who has learned the strange language of nature; whose senses have been refined by converse with her laws! To him when lights are dim and the curtains have been drawn there proceeds a voice, infinitely fine but vast as space. To him the crynoid speaks of the seas, the ancient seas, those departed waters of earth which rolled in the dark and awful days of the past. This stone tells a fearful tale of fire, and ages of heated vapor. This one groans, as from it comes the story of fathomless

darkness and measureless eons. And all the fossil, both leaf and animal, have a tongue for him. This rude stone ax with its vicious blade speaks of wars and battles in days of savage man, when might was right. This crude bronze knife, with corroded face tells of primitive man, marking the first appearance of the smith, the worker of metals. And this pottery —how well it withstands the hand of time! Upon its face are written the legends of a primitive race now forever vanished. And this awl, this bone needle —what hand of wife, or maid, or lover plied it in the rude skin garments? What the song she sung—the words she spoke? Was it in tears she wrought her domestic care, or did joy possess her? They all have a story from the mightiest to the tiniest.

Nothing is small or insignificant in nature. All from her workshop is stupendous! And when man—mighty man (?)—vaunting, proud and glorious, stands beside the atom, how vast is that enigma which like an impenetrable veil, misty, dark and imposing, hides it as in a mantle of night; lies forever between him and its secret!

It was into this sublime stream that Maurice Severgn had plunged—this fathomless, boundless sea! Having few real cares, he allowed himself day by day to float away upon the boundless blue depths, until at times he felt his very soul, like that of Buddha whilst fasting amidst the Himalayas, drawn from out the fog of earth, upward toward the zenith.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A SUNDAY EXPERIENCE—1860.

IT was ten o'clock by the distant chimes. For hours the streets had been thronged. In fact since early morn Christians of various denominations with Bible, prayer or hymn book in hand could have been seen slowly strolling to the various shrines of worship in either of the two cities. Bells were ringing. Chimes at intervals poured out their holy acclaim. Carriages, handsomely caparisoned horses, and the general pharaphernalia of an American Sunday was in full display. Hundreds of people were passing from city to city by way of the ferry boats. Likewise at the shore calmly awaited a river transfer, her black stack quietly smoking, giving now and then two or three thundering churns with her stern wheel to keep a close hug to the mooring, whilst throngs of passengers hastened over the gang plank and distributed themselves about the boat, seating themselves on straight-backed chairs or leisurely leaning upon the railing, looking over into the dark stream and amusing themselves with distant objects in the river. Steamers were lazily moving here and there and the shout of negroes could be heard as they rolled the heavy bales of wares about, unloading a vessel, on the opposite shore, regardless of Sunday observances.

"How do you do, Severgn?" saluted a young man who had just passed over the plank, observing

Severgn seated in a comfortable chair near the balustrade.

"Severgn, have a cigar?"

"Thanks, Mr. Rolf, I have just smoked."

"Who do you hear to-day?" inquired the friend, lighting his cigar and casting the match into the water.

"I have forgotten his name. He is from the far South—preaches a special sermon by request of some slave faction of the church upon the text of 'Slavery, a God annointed political regime.'"

"Ha! ha!" laughed Mr. Rolf.

"But he will turn us all over it is said!"

"I am no bibliologist, Severgn, therefore can't say!"

"Well, it will be a patch work from the patristic fathers, the grand old book asphixiated, the Bible with its head in the stocks!"

"How goes things, Severgn? I have been buried in business—up to my ears in hogsheads of tobacco the last week and have slipped my cogs on news."

"Renewed outrages in Kansas. Thunderings at the North, mutterings in the South, and a general social fermentation all over."

"Do you think it is growing murky in the social sky?"

"Rolf, there needs but the match to blow up the magazine."

"By the way, I saw you at the Grand last night. How did you like the Moor?"

"A superb production! I have but the sincerest

admiration for Edwin Forrest. He is the wonder of this age. But say, less of the Moor and more of the people!"

"Ha, ha, ha, Severgn! I knew there was meaning in those opera glasses," cried his friend jocosely.

"Well, Rolf, I admit as much," responded Severgn as he carelessly cast a straw into the water. "Who was she—I mean she in the proscenium box to the left, with pearl and gold-mounted opera glass—white kid gloves—dark auburn hair with diamond brooch gleaming on the side—a—"

"Short sleeves, pretty little hand, a beautiful eye—oh, delicious, elegant, charming, yes, ha, ha, ha!—Oh I knew the dart would strike home some time!" interrupted Mr. Rolf, slightly at Severgn's expense. "Sings like a bird, plays with the touch of a master!"

"You have met her then?" inquired Severgn inwardly piqued at the good fortune of his friend.

"I can't say that I have had that good fortune. But I have been nearer to her than you were last night. I have heard her voice though and flatter myself that I shall not be long in gaining her acquaintance." At this the conversation dropped into quiet. The boat was felt slowly to gain the center of the river, rolling and gently undulating as it proceeded. Finally the gentle clang of the bell announced the presence of the Ohio shore and all on board prepared to land.

"Rolf, I would be pleased with your company," said Severgn.

"Thanks, Severgn, I shall attend you. I would like to hear a good sounding sermon on that subject. Not that I have any hopes of hearing a conclusive argument, but I love to see them twist themselves into the contortions of their sophistical theories! You know Shakespeare tells us that 'the Devil may cite scripture to his own purpose!'"

Severgn and his friend landed and proceeded in the direction of the Presbyterian church, in which the pro-slavery evangelist was advertised to expound the holy lids upon the subject then disturbing the popular mind. Advancing under the bows of the great locust trees which at that period lined the street near the church they finally caught up with the throng which was filing slowly into the huge auditorium. Carriages and vehicles of many descriptions stood about disgorging their occupants. Cabmen in rich liveries were directing the handsome horses of private turn-outs; the beaded fancy work of the ladies glistened in the morning sun; a fresh cooling breeze stirred their ribbons and tossed the handsome plumes of their head-gear. Gold-headed canes flashed in the gloved hands of men and perfume arose from their handkerchiefs. Birds sang and the air was full of pleasant spring light. Miniature fountains played in the front yards and the grass sent forth a pleasant odor.

By times was heard the name of the minister who was to deliver the sermon of the hour. Short racy comments were being passed upon him, complimentary and otherwise. As might have been expected there was an unusual throng at the sacred portal when the bells

were tolling their final acclaim from the resounding belfry.

The "Dred Scot Decision" had but a short time previously been liberated from the highest court in the land, and its thunders were still reverberating both throughout the land of the free and the land of the slave. Maledictions and denunciations were heard. It was the hour of many ominous signs and prophesies. John Brown had been hung. There were fresh reports daily from the Kansas and Missouri outrages. Beecher was in the very splendor of his fame. Mrs. Stowe had written her first great work. The exploits of Guideon Wells and the philanthropy of Theodore Parker were told all over the land. Political caldrons were boiling at every fireside, and the friction of vast opposing ideas had raised the public temperature to the point of explosion. Every ear stood ready to drink the prevailing sounds, whilst every heart stood ready armed with unflinching bias to accept without question that which tickled, or to overthrow with violence that which opposed. Although from the day of its inception the advocates of slavery among the Indians by the New Englanders, and slavery among the Africans by the Church-of-State men in the Carolinas and Virginia, had worn the leaves of the Bible thumb-bare where they had pointed to Divine authority as an argument for trade in fellow-man, they now put on the shining armor of the Lord, and pointed to the Bible as the *only* means out of the difficulty. Argument had been driven to the last ditch.

"You plucked me by the coat; what do you want?" whispered Severgn in answer to a motion of Mr. Rolf.

"Have you no eyes?" exclaimed his friend.

Severgn looked ahead. There before him descending from a shining coupe he saw the being whom he had so much admired at The Grand. He felt his heart bound as he thought of the coincidence of their meeting. It was she! Was she not more beautiful than any being he had ever seen? He watched every move, the raising of the delicate parasol, the dancing of the ribbons of her bonnet under the pretty white chin and the sparkle of the bead work, the airy undulations of the fine lace at her sleeves and about her neck, which so uniquely finished her plain but beautiful dress, which was made of some soft cream colored wool. He saw the white neck proudly uplifted, the elevation of the eye-brow as she spoke to the lady, perhaps her mother who had descended from the coupe after her, the sparkling whiteness of her teeth as she smiled, the proud step, the queenly bearing of the entire body; all passed swiftly before his vision. For the space of a second the eyes of the young woman returned his glance, then suddenly fell upon the ground. As they ascended the stones and stood beneath the arching portal the vision had passed in and was lost.

"Rolf, why do you smile?" asked Severgn as he noticed to his unquestionable dislike his dear friend struggling beneath a white silk handkerchief which he was holding to his face to smother his mirth.

"Have I not a cause when I see the triple-plate

of stoicism shattered by a single dart? My apathetic friend literally undone by a single glance from a woman's eye?" answered Mr. Rolf, yet struggling over what he considered a comical plight for a man like Severgn. "Oh, I shall watch closely hereafter to see which way the wind blows, Severgn!"

Two by two and three by three gathering in knots and crowds, slowly progressing down the nave and deflecting to right or left as motioned the ushers who were assigning the people their seats, the throng steadily filled the sanctuary until every available seat was taken. Then chairs were brought in, and they in turn were readily occupied. Still on came the throng, nor did not stop until standing room itself was scarce to be had. The windows had been opened, and the spring air gently wafting in, tossed many a brilliant plume and ribbon. Here and there magnificent fans were seen floating in obedience to the graceful moves of many a pretty arm; and all about were seen warm glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes. It was a rare occasion for the favored orator of the hour. The altar was wreathed in flowers. A floral anchor of huge dimensions entwined with a cross of similar size sat upon the rostrum. A sweet fragrance was in the air, the sun fell through the mosaic glass of the gothic windows and diffused itself softly as if in holiness upon the multitude. A low musical murmur from the great organ drowned the dissonant shuffle of the incoming people with its waves of melody.

Presently there was a song by that vast concourse, in which many a cultured voice was heard here and

there throughout the uprisen throng leading the musical measures one by one until every spirit present felt a divine recompense for his or her presence, and an inspiration of the hour. Then followed a prayer, in which the blessing of Almighty God was asked upon the Nation; the Providential guidance of the Republic through its hour of darkest trial; and an "Oh God grant that the speaker of to-day may be given divine light upon the threatening disasters of the hour; that his lips may be clothed with eloquent prophesy; that he may speak as the prophets of old, guiding the people from the land of darkness and trouble to the realm of light and peace!" Also were there many touching allusions on the social distress through which the Republic was then passing; and every heart felt a sense of the solemn invocation.

When the last words from the lips of him who offered up this supplication had sank to silence, there was seen to proceed from the bevy of the choir—who were seated in a handsome balcony in front and above the rostrum—a lady dressed in light. She was conspicuously beautiful because of her statuesque appearance as she stood there before the railing from which swung flowing antique draperies, and in the midst of associates some twelve or more in number, ladies and gentlemen who retained their seats with pronounced approbation for her. Maurice Severgn had riveted his attention upon her. For a moment she stood tenderly holding the music soon to be rendered; when presently a low peal of the organ was heard, then another and yet another until every pipe it would seem

had taken up the melody. There was silence throughout that huge assembly until breathing itself were almost suppressed. Then slowly mingling with the notes of the instrument and entwining themselves with the solemn pulsations of the music were heard to ascend, words quivering in all their parts with the intensity of the theme until was universally experienced that indescribable thrill which creeps o'er the surface of the body to the very roots of the hair, seemingly to lift the listener from out his corporeal self. By slow and imperceptible intervals the soloist herself appeared to have grasped the inspiration of the preceding invocation and was now carrying those supplications up to heaven. Each note was quivering with that superhuman feeling only known to the great masters of the human voice. All that indescribableness of music when it transcends the earthly was present in that song. Finally the last words melted into silence, the great instrument slowly sank to rest, and they who had been entranced seemed to come back to earth with a sigh—that peculiar expression so noticeable in great gatherings after the occurrence of some scene which rivets and enchants the soul.

"Did I not tell you she could sing! There is necromancy in that voice!" exclaimed Mr. Rolf in an undertone to Severgn. Severgn said nothing. A hundred more were noticed to draw near to each other. It meant so many hundred compliments.

Then appeared the familiar face of the pastor of the congregation, who came forward and in a few telling

words announced the pleasure it gave him to introduce "him whose fame is already known to a majority if not all present—Rev. Dr. Cunningham, of Savannah."

"Cunningham of Savannah!" repeated Severgn in his mind. The sound of this name had certainly aroused some deep reflections in the thoughtful mind of Severgn; for instantly he cast his eyes toward the floor at his feet, and slowly raising his hand to his mustache he began to meditate. The picture of Vulcan and many other associate ideas then passed swiftly before his vision until his soul was carried far away into deeper and darker realms. Suddenly he awakened with a shudder—not unlike those experiences of Father Jerome, who through the vista of years had watched the clouds of a threatening fate. But what could be the meaning of these opaque mists which were now momentarily clouding the beautiful sunlight of his soul?

However, his mind after a time returned to the scene before him, and his eyes again alighted upon the central figure of the choir. "I must become acquainted with her," meditated Maurice Severgn.

The great age of Reverend Cunningham, now merging onto seventy-five years, the snowy locks which adorned his temples, the massive physique, now trembling slightly at the touch of senility, the leonine countenance, now furrowed deeply with many years of care, evoked a feeling of deep reverence as slowly he arose at the altar and began to open the lids of the ponderous Bible. His deep sonorous voice—made

now almost sepulchural by the relaxed condition of the vocal organs of the old man—bore a solemn impressiveness as he with slow measure pronounced his text and read the mandate from the Holy Book—"And thou shalt choose ye slaves from the people dwelling round about ye."

He then embarked into a brief discussion of the many forms of past human government—their rise and triumph, their decay and fall. He entered wisely into the affairs of the American Republic and traced it eloquently step by step from its first inception, through trials and tribulations; its struggle with nature and with fellow man, with foes at home and abroad. He traced what he termed "the divine principle in the Constitution," drawing from this a prophecy of the final triumph of the Republic; for he asserted without this divine assurance no government could last. It was plain he had read Hobbes, Paley and Blackstone. His erudition could not be doubted. He dwelt briefly upon the slave power in America, slavery among the New Englanders, the enslavement of the Indians by the Pilgrim Fathers, paying them a fitting and touching eulogy. He spoke of the introduction of the black man by the Dutch, and the eagerness with which they were purchased by the Virginian and Carolinian, then pointed to the patristic leaves to vindicate the act. There was a vein of solemnity about all he said which made it especially impressive; and, however sophistical would seem the argument in this day, the theological sanction of slavery as propounded by men of eloquence in those times was one of the most serious bul-

warks of that unquestionably obnoxious element of American politics, and went farther to sustain slavery than did the constitution itself. It is plain, by the chronicles of those times, that the idea of the complete elimination of church from state was by no means a clearly conceived and well settled principle of political ethics. Especially was this so in the South, where *Church-of-State* doctrines have more or less obtained since the days of Clarendon, Albemarle and Raleigh.

According to the asserted opinion of Rev. Cunningham, "social rule and human government must spring from the lips of God as sprang Palice from the head of Jove! It must be endorsed by God, maker of all things and projector of all laws."

There was much said upon the equalities and inequalities of mankind. That phrase of the Constitution, which recites that "all men are born free and equal," was taken as the text of this particular part of the sermon, and a full explanation given as suited the southern idea of that wonderful political document. He reviewed the necessary gradations in the economy of all human organization and labor—appearing as "master and servant, guardian and ward, commander, soldier, and sailor, husband and wife, parent and child, teacher and scholar, master and hireling; and at the bottommost grade, master and slave." Yea! "Did not Ham, who at the beginning stood as a third of the human family, receive divine disfavor? Was he not cast out for his sin? Did he not irreverently laugh and was he not for this accursed—he and his seed throughout all future generations? Ham's curse

became his children's curse, and by command of God did they stand under the control of God's peculiar people. And God alloted among his people the world. Shem was placed in Asia, Japhet in Europe and Ham consigned to Africa. Among these three fundamental nations of the earth was recognized a divine gradation. Japhet was the ruler of Shem and Ham was ordained the unqualified slave of each."

It was the opinion of Rev. Cunningham that upon this order of human relationship could be traced the hand writing of God; since from this primal example of three-fold relationship necessarily descended the manifold mutiplication of the order of the inferior and the superior, traceable throughout all recorded time It was "a sublime picture projected by the most high for the guidance and object lesson of mankind!" He continued—"The same God who had sanctioned the slaughter of the males and married women of Jabez-Gilead, and authorized the forcible carrying away of the four hundred virgins unto the camp of Shiloh, as wives for the remaining unslaughtered men of Benjamin in the Rock of Rimmon, hath sanctioned chattelism in man. The same God, the all-wise, truth loving king of kings sitting on the throne of heaven, who commanded Moses to slay the Midianites, annointed with his divine breath the traffic in human chattels." Things were not right or wrong *per se;* but right or wrong according to divine sanction. Slavery was right because so recognized in the court of heaven—"Oh, ye rejectors of the words of God and followers of Thomas Paine, beware for the vengeance of the Lord is mighty!"

Such remarks heard in the pulpit of to-day could but excite smiles and would be received as evidence of insanity; or on the other hand would be looked upon as marks of the most confirmed human depravity. And yet—it has not been the spiritual bias which has so changed but rather temporal interests which have changed. For did temporal interests of to-day demand such heroic vindication, there would many a pulpit resound with similar sophistry. For such is the common depravity of mankind when mundane interests are at stake!

"What saith the Lord in twenty-fifth Leviticus, 44, 45, 46!" exclaimed the divine, "Both thy bondmen and thy bond-maids which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids." And again, "Ye shall take them as an inheritance, for your children after you to inherit them for a possession, they shall be your bondmen forever."

Such was the theological bulwark of the most accursed of political dogmas! Such, in the abstract, was the doctrine of a divine who represented the theological excuse, for the perpetuity of slavery in America.

Here again we take leave of Rev. Doctor Cunningham; perhaps for the last time—and so did that congregation. Never again was that voice heard in a Northern city. Many years previous he had abandoned the pulpit and now only assumed the sacred toga on rare occasions. This was one of them. After a short tour in the North, he journeyed back to the land of

sunshine and flowers, convinced in his own heart that he had done much to promote the interest of the land he loved, and the cause he held sacred. Sad to relate —he lived to hear the first guns of the terrible conflict and saw the ascendency of the Confedercy of the Southern States, but died ere the dread calamity of war had settled its dark mantle o'er the land of secession. He heard the clash of the first stroke of the palmetto and pine, but felt not the shock which rived the former from its top to its base.

For Severgn, there was much in this day's experience upon which to reflect. He thought more deeply than ever upon the herculean struggle that at that time was going on in men's minds, and wondered how soon the storm which for so long had been brewing would break. The weak sophistry, to which the pulpit resorted to assist in bolstering a theory so disease-eaten, filled his already cynically inclined mind with renewed disgust. But this he again dismissed on short notice, as it was but the reiteration of the thread-bare argument which was heard so often from the pro-slavery theologists.

As he pursued his homeward course there were two things, however, which monopolized his thoughts, alternately flashing and dying out, succeeding and coming, rising and falling. They were completely unrelational in their nature and yet had their coincidence in time already begun to set the scenery before which shortly was to be enacted the drama of his life. One was the beauty of the soloist; the other was the light which Rev. Cunningham could possibly shed

upon the Mystery of Louise Pollard! The former seemed an evanescent vision of exquisite delight, forever at hand, and yet disappearing and returning as the glimmer of sunshine in a happy dream. He could not release himself and he did not wish to. The latter was but a rude prophetic projection into futurity by a mind suddenly aroused as if from slumber, filled with much gloom and dark presentiment.

It was thus that Maurice Severgn retired that night to his pillow. It was thus with the awakening beams of morning after the first sleepless night. Nor did those phantoms of light and shadow, at once commingling and drifting day by day, from that day vanish. The one grew brighter, the other darker.

What possible interest could Madam Severgn and her son have in the Mystery of Louise Pollard?

The curtain of a new world for Maurice Severgn had ascended.

CHAPTER XXX.

MADAM SEVERGN'S SECRET.

WHEN Maurice had returned home, after refreshing himself with cool water and towel, he repaired to his library, where he sat down in his easy chair and gave himself up to reflections upon his experiences of the day. In a few moments the handsome form of his valet, Belshazzar, appeared.

"Ah! it is you, Belshazzar!" exclaimed Severgn, turning in his chair.

"Yes sir," replied Belshazzar; "Madam has busi-

ness of importance which she wished to convey as soon as you arrived. Shall I inform her of your return?"

"Sit down Belshazzar," answered Severgn, at the same moment pointing to a chair near him. The valet did as he was bid.

Belshazzar was very fond of display, and on Sundays he arrayed himself in his best clothes; although during the week he was also somewhat of a dandy. He was now dressed in a full black suit, ruffled white shirt, polished collar and cuffs, exquisite neckwear, gold cuff buttons, gold vest chain which completely encircled his neck, and a diamond stud. His boots were shining like the sun, and the gold plated buttons of his coat had been freshly burnished. A plain gold ring ornamented one hand, which by times glittered as he at intervals arranged his dark glossy hair. Belshazzar was certainly a very expensive luxury. But then besides being a very handsome ornament his faithfulness in the performance of his duties as a valet, body servant, etc., could not be impeached.

"Belshazzar," began Maurice, "you recollect what I told you concerning the slave Vulcan?"

"Yes sir."

"Very well. I am thinking of sending you on a private mission to South Carolina.

"I am at your service," replied the handsome valet in whose speech scarcely a trace of negro dialect was observable.

"Could you get yourself in readiness in the course of a fortnight?"

"In less time. Am I to proceed alone?"

"Why do you inquire?"

"You are aware of course that there is much danger to one of my color in traveling alone. I may be arrested and sold from the block. Passports and manumission papers are not always reliable," answered Belshazzar, who knew that in some places the *writ of habeas corpus* was not recognized where African blood was the issue; and likewise he could be stolen from his master as easily as a gold watch, a ring, or other personal chattel.

The gentle clinck of a bell was then heard, and Belshazzar, prompt as an automaton, arose at the sanction of his master and proceeded to the parlor. Presently he returned and signified to Maurice that he was wanted.

When Maurice entered the parlor he saw that Madam Severgn had sent for him.

"Pardon me mother; I was intending to send Belshazzar to inform you of my arrival. I have been thinking of sending him to South Carolina."

"Here is a letter which was brought to me by the morning post. Read it," exclaimed Madam.

Maurice took the letter and read aloud:

ST. LOUIS, MO., June 10, 1860.

MRS. EUGENE SEVERGN—Dear Madam: A gold watch which at one time undoubtedly belonged to your deceased husband, has been discovered here in a pawn shop. On the cap of the watch is to be found the following inscription: 'Presented to Eugene Severgn by his wife, January 1, 1840.'

An attempt has been made to erase this name

with the blade of a knife; but with the assistance of a glass it is possible to decipher the above inscription. Upon investigation we have learned that the watch was sold to the pawn broker for $30 by a shrewd Italian gentleman whose name is Cavilazo. We have secured the watch and will send it to you for inspection. We are hunting Cavilazo. His detection will perhaps lead us back to the crime of 1845. Our agent will soon arrive in your city with proper credentials to you. We understand also that Cavilazo is in some way connected with a trouble which occurred in Cincinnati some four years ago, the facts of which are partially known to us now, and will be of great interest to you. Yours Very Respectfully,

——— Detective Agency.

"Maurice, dear!" exclaimed Madam, drawing her handkerchief from her dampened eyes, "this is very wonderful news."

"The stealth and persistency of this company is certainly remarkable," replied Maurice.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ROSETTA.

FOUR years had elapsed now since Rosetta had come to live in the home of Mrs. North. Four years had come and gone. The flight of time to her seemed wonderfully swift, marked as it was by a succession of happy days.

The padre and the fearful old garret—the home in which she had lived a few years previous lingered but as the remembrance of a painful dream. Often she had related to her protectors, whom she addressed from

the first as father and mother, the many strange experiences of her life as a roving player—many a scene of which was filled with the wildest detail and most thrilling incident.

Mrs. North from the first had cultured Rosetta closely in the art of house-keeping. During the greater part of one summer, whilst Mrs. North was visiting in the East, Rosetta had conducted the affairs of the house herself; guiding the domestics with a judgment which the Doctor considered truly wonderful.

Rosetta had also during this time enjoyed the experience which is commonly alloted to girls of her age. There had been schools and churches, music and dancing, theaters and home entertainments, bright young faces and confidential friends. There had been picnics in the woods, excursions on the river, lovely days in the parks, Christmases, and an innumerable lot of holidays. But Rosetta had now passed from childhood to the rank of womanhood. Her auburn hair had grown darker, her eyes more lustrous and expressive, her form had assumed the height and bearing of womanly dignity. She had lovers and suitors, and innumerable close friends of her own sex. She gave parties and musicales. In vocal music she had become famous. Hundreds came to church purposely to hear Rosetta sing.

The affection which Rosetta had conceived for Maurice Severgn had slept in her heart those four years like a profound secret. Whether this spark was still alive or whether it had been smothered, none but

Rosetta knew. At intervals during the last year, Mrs. North had tokens that Rosetta was not entirely happy. Not but what Rosetta was keenly alive to the rare advantages of her home; for this Rosetta showed in her faithfulness in all duties entrusted to her.

"Among the list of Rosetta's acquaintances, is there anyone on whom she seems to bestow more consideration than another?" inquired Mrs. North of her husband one evening when Rosetta was entertaining a company of friends.

"None, Margaret!" answered the Doctor. "I have observed that she has a few specials among her lady acquaintances however."

"One day Rosetta and I when out shopping chanced to visit the Vienna Studio, in which we had been informed there were some rare collections of art. Whilst sojourning through these galleries, among some fifty or sixty other ladies and gentlemen, there was one who more than another seemed to draw the attention of Rosetta. He was entirely unknown to me. I was certain that he returned Rosetta's gaze with more than ordinary interest, and as I recollect that he came in directly after us, I then very much questioned if he had not purposely done so; for although his deportment whilst in the studio was entirely without censure, he certainly possessed other motives aside from a desire to admire the paintings!"

Doctor North smiled. "Margaret your solicitude in those little affairs is really amusing though very motherly toward Rosetta, I admit. You say Rosetta noticed him?"

Rosetta was seen to arise gasping for breath and struggling to speak.
——————pointing to a painting upon the wall——

"I am certain she did; for once I looked into her face inquiringly as if to say, 'Rosetta, what is the meaning of this?' Rosetta slightly blushed; and when I again looked about the individual had disappeared.

"What were his outward characteristics?" inquired the Doctor.

"Well, he was a young man about twenty-six years of age or older. He was dressed in a neat spring suit of grayish cloth; wore a stiff hat and supported a silver mounted cane. He had the unquestioned bearing of a gentleman of moral pride and intelligence, as his comments to another gentleman whom he had casually met certainly indicated. His face was cleanly shaven, with the exception that he wore a light mustache. Robert, I shall learn from Rosetta who this gentleman was. I am convinced that she knows. If they should chance to meet again I am certain from what I there saw that an acquaintanceship commanding our solicitude would be sure to follow."

Doctor North said nothing, but arose and went to another part of the house, smiling with pleasure that his wife was looking so closely after the future of Rosetta.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MAURICE SEVERGN.

THE habits of a student's life had prepared Maurice Severgn's faculties for a huge psychic conflagration. The hour for it to burn had come. It was the first time his soul had been touched by the sentiment of love. For many years books and the tools and dreams of a student had been his only occupation. But where now could the mind, once fallen as his, hope to find a corresponding dreamland?

Some three weeks had now passed since that memorable Sunday. Severgn was seated in an easy chair near the great window in his library looking out upon the leaf-laden trees in the yard. In vain had he tried to borrow from his books a brief abstraction from the mental scenes which now put to flight all other objects, and although those obtruding images were alternately clouded by dark presentiments, nevertheless they had been the life of his very being. He raised a book to his eyes—a classic romance in this instance—he read, then re-read—it was no use; he cast it aside. There was but one thing now acceptable to his mind. It was her face. And yet had that vision so lovely, so radiant with every beauty conceivable to him, been ushered in with a spectre, a dark something which haunted his very pillow. The revival of the story of the Pollards mysteriously wrought within the mind of Maurice Severgn some

inexplicable presentiments. He had sought an interview with Rev. Doctor Cunningham, but the reverend had departed and the attempt to learn more had failed.

It could not be expected however that a man like Severgn would succumb without a struggle; without most careful debate with himself. But mental struggle and debate are sometimes dangerous, as they bring into clearer relief the phantoms of the mind. For two weeks Severgn gave himself up to reflection. He even strove to bury himself more deeply in his books; and this he fairly well succeeded in doing. But at intervals would he recall the scenes at the theater and the church, the full details of which remained remarkably vivid with him. Whilst occupying the proscenium box at the theater the young woman had worn a close fitting princess dress of rich white brocade satin, which was cut sufficiently low at the neck to display a beautiful white throat, around which was entwined some half dozen coils of costly pearls. Her hands were encased in long, white kid gloves, which reached to her elbows. At the back of her head her hair was done up in a loose coil, fastened with a diamond brouch. By times she swayed a fan of delicate ostrich feathers, the pearl handle of which was made fast to a slender silver chain which swung pendant from her waist. Upon the back of her chair, carelessly tossed from her shoulders, hung a rich opera cloak with a lining of pale pink silk, the effect of which gave a most fitting back-ground to the exquisite picture in front. By times she raised a

pearl mounted opera glass to her eyes, and between the acts when the curtain had fallen marking the epochs in the sad but beautiful and heroic love of the immortal Othello, this young woman, who had now unconsciously attracted the attention of Severgn, modestly interested herself upon the sea of faces in the vast throng about her. Severgn raised his glass in return and guided it in that direction. Almost instantly he caught her face, but as quickly retreated. She had observed this movement, for instantly her eyes dropped toward the floor and an emotion slightly displayed itself in her countenance. If Severgn had asked himself why this young woman was now more interesting to him than any other, he could not have answered this question. And yet this was so.

Aside from the reflections that this carefully treasured scene now evoked in the struggling mind of Severgn there had two other things occurred which had resulted in completing the enchantment. One was the renewal of this vision at the church, the occurrence of which was a purely casual one, and therefore entirely beyond control. The other could have been avoided; in fact it was self-invited, and therefore was he solely to blame for his present mental disarrangement, the effect of which ruthlessly tore up and sundered his mind from that task of life which he had begun to regard as a religion.

He uneasily arose and paced slowly from one end of the library department to the other. Had these maps and charts and tiers of books been petrified to stone they could not at that moment have possessed

less power to conjure back the melancholy and wandering spirit of Maurice Severgn.

And this brings us to an interesting but certainly paradoxical feature in the character of this young man.

The soul of Maurice Severgn was sometimes thickly clouded with depressing sadness. By times he imbibed of the bitter cup of misanthropy. His mind went on long pilgrimages.

"Throughout multitudinous and infinite nature there is but one force!" exclaimed Severgn, "and this force is eternal. It laid the foundation of the earth. It appears in the machinery of man; now love, now hate; now building empires and again destroying them. It was felt at Tyre, Memphis, Alexandria and Carthage; and did not Rome know it under the sword of Atilla? Creation and Destruction—joint heirs of Infinity!

"By the strange caprices of this infinite force Cuvier was awed into silence as he looked upon those vast cemeteries of earth, the 'cataclysms' which gird the globe as with successive mantles of mourning robes; and yet had he followed the footsteps of man, here too would he have found the sad monuments of ruthless Destruction. All is perishable; all is folly; all must pass away!"

Severgn turned with sad heart from the ancient ruins of the past; "Stonehenge, her cromlechs half buried with grasses growing between," exclaimed he, "voluptuous Carthage, her fallen palaces and golden towers; Elephanta, with sheep now nibbling where

gold-laced sandals once were worn upon the feet of princes; Isis unveiled; Vesta's extinct altars; Etruria's stupendous grave; tigers in the palace yards of Persepolis; camels browsing in Babylon near great Belshazzar's throne; lizzards creeping over the altars of the Temple of the Sun; Paestum silently sleeping amidst the roses; Tadmor in the wilderness! Ah, how sublime are the footslips of time—these dials of human history which mark the epochs from age to age, stopping to cover with mold and ruin the fondest toys of man whilst rearing continents where once were seas! How vast that time-book of nature; an ocean whereon the eyes may look and mark from pole to pole the intervening wrecks of man; centuries of moving clouds with recurring gorgeous sunrises and sunsets! The eyes smart and the brain reels at the sight—as when endless pageantry moves o'er the plains and soft music filled with joy and hope float sweetly upon the air; more sad and pathetic because those glinting blades must some day rust, those ensigns fade, those burnished armaments lay battered on the field; and all that song and pomp of drum and bugle, the acclaim of vain hope and ephemeral life must some day vanish; when those thinned ranks under scorching sun and tempest shall melt into the final dirge as finally they must, and a blank and cheerless night with sparsely scattered stars twinkling o'er the vast and silent cemetery of man!"

With a heart like that of Maurice Severgn's which was attuned to such subtle sympathy for all that awakens the sublimer emotions, and with a mental

horizon so broad, it was but natural for him to philosophize upon the vanities of man and yield a moan for the utter hopelessness of the ephemeral species to which he belonged; grasped as he saw them in the hand of the mighty forces of Creation and Destruction. The eolian harp hung in the wind varies its notes as the wind rises or falls. Maurice Severgn was able to detect the plaintive notes—"The sad sentiment that comes laden upon the breath of nature!" exclaimed he, "For what is it, but the wail of elemental nature springing from the lips of the inanimate! Mind is but another form of eolian harp, a thousand times more refined—an instrument whose strings are strands of imperceptible yet material unisons, over which ceaselessly tremors the musical wave-beats of nature in sympathy with the Infinite!"

Maurice Severgn was distinct in his individuality. He was gifted with the attributes of genius. But genius is dangerous. If too lofty, it is covered with perpetual snows—if too deep, it gropes in shadows. It is easy to go about the earth and pick out these human altitudes and depressions; for the great cynics and misanthropes who stand forth in history were all men of the extreme heights. For cynicism is but the ice and misanthropy the snows of revery dropping upon the peaks of human mind. In the abysmal realms or lands of depression fewer of the rank of genius are to be found; for it is the land of profound thought whose sunlight is sometimes darkened by the clouds of melancholy. The pessimism of Johnson, Swift, Byron and Carlyle, of Leopardi, Schopenhauer

and Lamartine may be cited as examples of the gloom that occasionally encompasses the spirit of genius. Goethe, Beethoven, Chateaubriand and George Sand were each afflicted with acute melancholy. Cowper, St. Simon and Alfieri each attempted suicide.

Although the heart of Severgn knew the cup of melancholy his mind was not likely to allow this phase of his nature to ripen into danger, for he kept himself engrossed in the active field of science and discovery. Observing the tendency of his nature he had already begun to change it by artificial methods—devotions in his laboratory, physical exercise, fresh air, music and the drama—so that for a year past he had experienced no real fits of melancholy until by force of chance as we have seen, his system of life had been suddenly disturbed by a condition the nature of which was entirely new to him and which he utterly failed to analyze.

"I will yield for the time being," meditated he. "If there can be as much pleasure in her association as my foolish imagination now depicts, then will I be most truly happy again. If it is but a mirage of the mind—why! I will soon learn this and again I shall be content."

To acquire the name of this being was no trick. This he had done from his friend before leaving the portals of the church. The episode in the studio had but increased his ardor to learn more. He resolved to hasten his acquaintance with her. He would hesitate no longer upon the fiery rim of enchantment.

Thus he meditated. "Her father and I are near friends. He has been within my library; he has

walked through my laboratory and has surveyed with pleasure the fossil and antiquary. He has complimented my act in the court in behalf of Vulcan the slave. I have the hospitality of his house over and over again. Let me see!" He was perusing the best means to accomplish the desired end. "Why! It was simple enough!" He was in need of a certain rare work, which he recollected that the Doctor owned. It was enough. He would "go borrow this book and—" Very well. He found himself not long after in Dr. North's library in lively conversation concerning the book and its merits. It was the second time he had been within the Doctor's home. The first time, he came to secure the assistance of the Doctor for his mother who was then ill. That had been some four years previous. But during those four years the two had met upon many occasions and despite the disparity of age a close friendship had grown up between them.

The conversation proceeded for sometime when it was suddenly interrupted in a very surprising and unexpected but agreeable manner.

There was a noise in the adjoining room like rapidly approaching footsteps, and in the next moment Rosetta entered the room. "Father!" exclaimed she impulsively—then for the first time becoming aware of the presence of Maurice Severgn, she hesitated, slightly blushing—"I beg both your pardons, father. I thought you were entirely alone!" "Well, my daughter," interrupted Doctor North, "you have occasioned no serious interruption. Proceed, Rosetta—

what is it you wish?" asked he, arising and holding forth his strong arms to Rosetta.

"Never mind, father," answered Rosetta in a low voice, "I wished to learn something concerning the blooming time of a certain kind of flower which I have planted in the arabesque figures that line the front walk."

A slight perspiration was standing upon Rosetta's face, for she had been busy working among the flower beds which ornamented the front yard with their many fanciful patterns.

"Will you meet my friend?" asked the Doctor in a whisper, at the same time smiling gently upon Rosetta's face. Rosetta hesitated; she was not certain of her mind. She took momentary counsel with herself. "Perhaps her hair was loosening from its coil—was she suitably attired?"—and many other questions flashed swiftly through her mind. Rosetta's dress was a delicate pink mull with here and there a spray of forget-me-nots. The sleeves were made loose, and gathered at the wrists. She wore a white lace handkerchief about her neck. This she had folded across her bosom, fastening the two ends with a wide sash also of pink mull. Upon her head she wore a hat made of a kind of fine white netting, the broad shirred brim of which shaded her eyes whilst in the sun and ornamented her head of dark auburn hair. The ties of this hat had been loosened and as she entered the room they floated easily over her shoulders. "A perfectly proper costume for the flower beds and the garden," meditated Rosetta, "but for an occasion like

this—?" And again, and even more serious—"A flower spade in her hand: and she sweating from exertion—her shoes slightly stained with marks of fresh earth!" She was certain that she looked like a mole that had been surreptitiously unearthed from the sod. "Come!" exclaimed the Doctor. Taking Rosetta by the hand, and placing his arm fatherly about her waist he lead her forward. "Mr. Severgn, this is my daughter, Rosetta," said he, introducing Rosetta.

Severgn arose and acknowledged the compliment.

Rosetta's experience had made of her a rapid reader of thought as it swiftly writes itself in the human face. There was a certain cadence in Severgn's voice preceded by a transient expression of his visage which went quickly through Rosetta's mind as she bowed in recognition of his short salutation.

When Rosetta had entered the room, three particular impressions passed in quick succession through the mind of Maurice Severgn as Rosetta stood beside the form of Doctor North. She was certainly younger, though taller than she had appeared to him on the two previous occasions when her stature had been compared to that of Mrs. Dr. North. Rosetta was also certainly more beautiful, thought he. In this he was mistaken, for never until now had he looked into the depths of Rosetta's eyes, and for a moment he was almost bewildered at the extraordinary luxuriousness of Rosetta's dark auburn hair, which at this moment, entirely unknown to Rosetta, had loosened from its coil and fallen disheveled upon Dr. North's protecting arm.

Rosetta was quick witted. "I am pleased to meet you," replied she with a slight quiver in her voice. "My delight these June mornings is to dig in the ground!" exclaimed she holding up the flower spade. "And then the young flowers are so delicate and sweet, you know, when they begin to outline the graceful curves in the mounds."

"A most enjoyable labor," answered Severgn carelessly turning the leaves of the book which he held, "I have a large garden of flowers and vegetables in which I work every morning till the sun gets so hot I can't work more, then I retire to the house with my body wringing with the sweat of honest toil, and after a dash of cool water I take myself into my library or laboratory to reap the benefits of an exhilarated brain."

From these light conventionalities the conversation drifted on, Doctor North supplying a suggestion now and then, until the minds of all three had found lodgment upon interesting matter, which lasted a few moments, after which Severgn arose with the book under his arm, bowed, saying: "Doctor, I shall take extra care of your valuable book—"

'Use it so long as you desire," interrupted the Doctor.

In this manner was completed that slight bit of formality which but an hour previous had stood like a wall between Maurice Severgn and Rosetta. In a few moments more Severgn was slowly receding from the yard, delighted with the thoughts of his successful venture.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SEVERGN'S VOWS.

SEVERGN slowly wended his way home. Time passed and two whole weeks had finally gone. The book had lain undisturbed exactly where he had placed it. By chance, one evening, his eyes fell upon it. He picked it up and began to scan its pages, but with a guilty conscience, for as yet he had not read a single line. Suddenly and very unexpectedly he disentombed a little flower from the flying leaves. The crushed and now inanimate thing fell gently upon the desk at which he was sitting. He picked it up and held it tenderly by its slender stem. None but Rosetta could possibly have thought of hiding away and preserving this little creature—this miniature of nature's infinite beauty—this relic of Creation and Destruction, meditated Severgn. He sat silently holding the little flower but looking into vacancy. "Am I weak—have I no will?" inquired Severgn to himself, replacing the flower between the leaves where it had made an impression in the paper, and at a spot where it had wept out its life.

Again he raised the book to his eyes. The little flower seemed to mark a place upon the leaf whereat some human eye had found interest; for the words were lightly underscored—"All is but a fleeting show—a pageant of vain pomp—even love itself may fade and vanish."

"Unwelcome page," meditated Severgn—"cynic!" to himself he exclaimed, "I have no further use for you!" and he cast the book upon the table.

Even the foreboding reverberations which a slight reawakening concerning the Pollards had mysteriously wrought within him, had now begun to vanish. He saw and he knew only Rosetta. Finally he secretly confessed to himself that he was in love. Why pour over Voltaire, or Bacon, Shakespeare or Dryden? It was all Rosetta. And yet by times he halted and castigated himself upon this seeming weakness—he who had groped so long among the ruins of fallen nations, had dreamed with the mystics, thought with the philosophers and sages; he who had distilled his very soul in the witch-light of speculative ideality. But in vain did he betake himself again to abstruce metaphysics, hoping to drown that something which had crept into his being and like the moth was devouring the fibers of what he had considered the ideal life, that of the intellectual voluptuary, the acquiring of knowledge for the mere pleasure of heaping up within ourself mountains of ideas and facts. It seemed now but a one-sided existence, a mental misery! There was nothing now which was worthy of struggle but that it could be attained more quickly and with better results, not alone in a student's cell under the weak beams of the midnight lamp, but with the assistance of that other part of his nature, which till that hour he had never missed.

The unqualified hospitality of the home of Miss North had been extended to him. He knew that he

was respected and admired by the Norths—he loved their daughter, and he was resolved that she should know it.

In this way a fortnight passed—a mere conventional demand by the tyranny of propriety, during which the nights were restless and the days were insufferably long and empty; and then he saw Rosetta again.

It was in the twilight of a beautiful summer evening. She sang and played for him. Rosetta was also a beautiful conversationalist—apt and interesting. Severgn saw her face in the dim light of the stars as she accompanied him a few steps toward the gate. He prayed that he might soon meet her again. She signified a consent; but the tenderness of Severgn's thoughts had wrought his sensibilities to an acute state of apprehension, and his heart quaked as he persuaded himself that he had heard the slightest quaver of indifference in Rosetta's voice. Could it be that he had obtruded? Had he misjudged the enkindlements of soul in her eyes? It thrust him to the heart! It was a painful asking, an insufferable questioning!

Many weeks of summer were gliding by, during which occurred several long walks in the park, and numberless private talks on the rustic bench where the drone of insects and the chirp of birds in the embowering branches mingled with their words. In the evenings Severgn listened to those delightful songs with which Rosetta long ere their meeting had enchanted the public.

Rosetta was not to be won so easily. Maurice

Severgn had bitterly learned this. But he would conquer! He felt that he must!

One day to his inexpressible surprise he saw his friend Rolf strolling leisurely down the gravel walk with Rosetta by his side. They were to all appearances happy. They were laughing. At once Severgn felt that indescribable pang known to jealous lovers. His heart seemed to burn to a very cinder the instant his eyes fell upon them. "And what!" said he after a time, chiding himself, "shall I turn madman with my closest friend?" And yet Severgn could not help feeling that Rolf was doing him a wrong. He was now upon the rack. Would he hesitate longer? He resolved to tell Rosetta of his love, of his misery. And yet was it not already plain to her?

Again he attempted to break the chain which had been forged about him! He buried himself by sheer force of will in those delightful pages of Jean Jaques Rousseau only to arise after an experience of pain and mental drudgery to the knowledge of his thraldom. It was far more pleasant to follow the stream of passion, thwarted and embittered by frequent jealousy, and sink at last, if he must, in the very pool of despair, than to drag out days and nights in self-torture.

Finally fall came, and the leaves of the trees were touched with gold. He resolved to close the struggle. He would bravely tell her of his passion. He would ask her to become his wife. If she refused; why then he could endure, or take himself to new scenes of life.

Rosetta and he were taking an afternoon drive into the country. Away out over the hills, the blessed hills

and woodland. It was about three o'clock in the afternoon when through the deep pass between the hills they saw the last trace of the city fade gently from sight. Gradually the rocks and hills in silence had uplifted themselves about them, and wild birds had become plentiful. It was a river road—here and there an obtruding rock, a crag, then a scope of water silent and silvery as a mirror, a bit of woods then a space of heath and then a vista of solemn and impressive trees. Now and then they heard the lumbering sound of an approaching wagon, and again the whirr of a buggy. Once they stopped and watered their thirsting horse in a great basin beside the road which had been provided by the charitable public and which was now bubbling over with cool water. Finally they neared the foot of a cliff which from the thoroughfare seemed to overlook the water's edge. Severgn tied the horse in a cool retreat and then he and Rosetta passed up through the woodland, slowly gathering leaves and flowers, where great oaks and walnut trees spread their sheltering bows above them.

"There is a summit up there," said Severgn, pointing southward, "where the cliff beetles over the water's edge. It is a great airy height shaded with heavy trees and carpeted with soft grass. Let us go to it! It commands the river for miles either way and a view of the Kentucky shore."

"Are there any pathways?"

"Pathways! Yes, plenty, and well worn. I know every foot of the ground; besides it's only a step!"

"Is there not a growth of lilies at the base of the cliff, near the water's edge, Maurice?"

"Yes, and a great variety of wild flowers."

"Then I will go; for I can sit upon the cliff till you have gathered an armload of those handsome things to take home!"

They proceeded, climbing with tiresome step the steep incline; Maurice at intervals bending aside the obtruding limbs which crossed their path. Here and there huge grape vines climbed the trees from the base to the very top where they swung pendant from the bows. They heard the wood-birds singing and saw them flying through the branches. At one place they came into an open spot carpeted with soft yielding turf and a mat of blue grass mottled with sunlight which fell from between the thick leaves of the great trees which shaded it. Here they sat down for a time upon a convenient log to catch breath. They had been chatting all the way as the wild scene successively disclosed its many beauties—the flowers, the scented grasses, the melancholy old gray stumps, the great friendly trees, the cool inviting shade, the shrill cry of birds, the chattering chip-munks, the frightful harmless lizzards darting quickly out of sight, great beetles and droning bees met them as they passed leisurely along.

"It's a wild and enchanting spot, Rosetta!" exclaimed Severgn casting his eyes upward among the moss-covered limbs and leaves. They had known each other by their first names for some time.

"It is a sweet little paradise," answered Rosetta. "See, there is the nest of an oriole!" and she pointed upward.

"And there the rude hut of the ominous crow; see where the black clump of sticks lays in the fork of that elm! Hark! Do you hear that?"

"Yes, what is it?" answered Rosetta holding her breath in wonderment.

"It's the bark of a squirrel."

"Is it truly a squirrel? Why, I have heard them many a time and did not know what they were!" exclaimed she in a whisper. At that, a swarm of tiny birds with yellow bodies and dark spots on their wings, fifty or more in number, alighted in the thick branches of a haw-thorn near by. A robin also mysteriously alighted upon the earth and began gamboling about, rattling the leaves, chirping and casting up his inquisitive eye. Then other birds came in quick succession, finches, larks, linnets, bee-eaters and blackbirds until a veritable amphitheater of birds were arranged about them.

"You are warm!" exclaimed Rosetta as she observed Severgn wiping the perspiration from his brow.

"Somewhat," answered he, dashing the cool breeze upon her face and his own with his straw hat. "Come, let us be off!" said he arising and lifting Rosetta tenderly by her gloved hands, whilst she obstinately drew back and made him pull her from her place on the log, laughing the while and mocking him with her smiling lips and uplifted eyes. Suddenly she arose with a loud girlish laugh and started hurriedly on in front of him till her dress was caught in a network of briers, when she stopped to release herself. Severgn hastened up, stooped and clipped the vine

with his knife, but still it clung to the dress. They both engaged the brier, struggling and laughing. Their hands met each other. Rosetta's being sheathed in kid gloves delicately plucked at the desperate little thorny creature, whilst Severgn's, pricked and stung, were slowly unbinding the cloth from the grasp of the brier. Their bodies unavoidably clashed; Severgn glanced into Rosetta's face and saw her glowing eyes and laughing lips and teeth. It was a rapturous vision. He felt the throbbings of his heart sending whirling fiery passions in every part of his body. He could not help seeing Rosetta's pretty foot as by times it protruded from beneath the dress.

Finally the vine having been released, they again hurried on to the top of the hill. Here they stopped under the boughs of an oak which stood like a solitary sentinel upon the very verge. There was a soft green sward, elevated here and there, showing distinctly where the great roots of the tree lay sleeping and growing beneath the sod.

"Oh, what a delightful place!" exclaimed Rosetta as she stood looking first up and then down the river so broad, still and shining beneath them.

Far down there near the water's edge waved a field of lilies upon their watery stems like birds with white plumes. To the south arose the Kentucky hills in gentle undulations, clothed in places with dense forests so wild and lonely. Rosetta could see where the river was lost between the abutting elevations to the westward, where it sank mysteriously into silence. Eastward was visible the dim outline of the city, glinting

by times in the afternoon sun, its boisterous noise lost in the distance. Rosetta was delighted. She sat in the shade and watched Maurice as he clambered down the rugged bank toward the water's edge in the direction of the water-lilies. She saw him struggling with the rocks and the briers as he descended ledge by ledge until he was far below. She saw him gather the flowers one by one of the many kinds and colors which clothed the declivity from the top to the watery base. She watched him explore the lilies until it would seem from where she sat he had gathered a dozen or more. The risk was all for her; the struggle for her. Again she thought of Bianco and his prophesy.

She saw Severgn tiresomely ascend the hill, fighting with grass, hillock, rock and vine until his perspiring face was again in sight. It was all for her! The gleam of his eyes, the ruddy countenance, the slow tiresome plod, the sigh of exhaustion as he fell at her feet and emptied the floral treasure upon the ground by her side. She admired his strong lithe body as it reclined upon the sloping bank. She observed the vigorous pulsings of his blood as it beat in the now distended arteries of his neck; and then it was that she felt the first wild throb of the pulse of glory, of power, of feminine conquest. She grasped his straw hat; drew herself nearer until only the flowers lay between them in a great tender, forbidding heap, some of which were sprinkled over her lap. She fanned Severgn's face as he reclined upon his elbow wiping the perspiration from his brow and neck with his handkerchief.

To Rosetta what joy there was in the knowledge of such feminine power! A look, a gesture, a mere hint had set in motion and impelled the strong figure before her! And to think that a glance, a gratuitous smile, a word from the heart, a mere touch of the hand was all he asked in return—that he would dare the elements of the river, to know that he would dash into those waters to his very lips were it to save her! She had never felt such a realization of self—of exquisite individuality till now. It was the very ecstacy of her woman's heart. And yet she must not, she dare not but speak, but glance, but breath her affection, but stroke his temple, or touch with her elbow his strong shoulder to let him know by sign or pantomime that she was unspeakably grateful, that she in a word, loved him!—for with such dignity, such power in ambush it is, that woman rules the world.

They began slowly culling the flowers, he naming them according to their species, describing their peculiarities, their properties. After a time Rosetta had made a wreath and innocently laughing hung it about Severgn's brow.

Why do flowers spring up and blossom if not for lovers?

They went on talking of various light and trivial things, sorting the flowers and slowly building a huge bouquet. A passenger steamer with music and happy excursionists on board hove in sight, came opposite and went on happily down the stream. Again they were alone. They heard the whispering breezes in the boughs overhead; they saw the swallows sweeping

and whirling through the sky far out over the waters. Rosetta stooped and began fixing a small bunch of tender petals to the lapel of Severgn's coat. He drew nearer to her that she should not be at such disadvantage. He felt the sensation of feminine hands pressing his breast. He saw the glow of passion upon her cheeks and the tender tokens of her eyes. There was a radiation of soul to soul. His heart leaped and struggled as the arrows swept through him. Rosetta felt her hand closed in Severgn's. Her senses swam and her heart sank and struggled. She felt the quiver of his lips as they were pressed against her wrist; she saw the trembling light flash from his eyes as he clasped her hand and pressed it tightly till he would fain have crushed it against his bosom. There was a gleaming ecstacy in his face, a quiver upon his lips, when Rosetta slowly withdrew her hand from him—but with a struggle. Presently they arose and walked slowly over to a point where the cliff dropped suddenly with declivitious side to the water's edge, where they stood scanning the silently moving water, talking lowly, but reading each other's minds more through the tokens of the eyes than by vocal speech. Severgn instinctively clasped Rosetta with his strong arm as they looked down into the giddy abyss. The spot where they stood was a ragged rocky parapet completely enclosed and sheltered by the trees and copses. Presently Rosetta felt herself drawn nearer to Severgn until their faces knew each other's fire. They had reached the very summit of love's enchantment.

"Rosetta," exclaimed Severgn, his lips quivering

and his face turned to her—"Well, Maurice!" answered Rosetta under her breath. There was a pause and a silence until they heard the beatings of each other's hearts. Rosetta slowly withdrawing her hand felt Severgn crush it more tightly to his breast. It was buried beneath his coat and she distinctly felt the throbbing of his heart. She knew the agony under which he must now labor. "Well," said she again breaking the long silence, during which more had been said than tongue is capable of uttering. Rosetta felt the presence of Severgn's hand as it pressed against the back of her head. Again his lips quivered and the silence was broken by Severgn's lowly confiding voice. "Rosetta, I love you—you must know that I love you!" There was another silence. Rosetta cast her eyes upon the water. To have wrenched her hand from his was vain. She did not try. She felt uncontrollable heavings in her breast. She was about to speak but the dryness in her throat choaked her utterance. "Rosetta, be mine! You can never have another love you as do I! Speak, what shall I do to prove my loyalty, my supineness before you? But mention it, and if it be even to the extent of acutest bodily pain, it shall be instantly done!" Rosetta made no reply. "Speak quickly, Rosetta, this silence tears my heart. Rosetta, speak. If but a look, a lisp—my fate, let me hear it!" The struggle of Rosetta's hand had ceased. Severgn felt it relax and tremble. He read a sanction upon her lips for they slightly quivered. There was a warranty in her silence—an unmistakable confidence in her eyes.

Again she felt herself drawn nearer, and yet nearer until Severgn's burning lips were pressed against her temple and she heard the murmur of his love. It was a divine moment. The pressure of those lips against her pulsing temple, the crushing fold of his arm as it pressed her face to his, though but a moment in duration, yet was it to the imagination an hour, a year; the crowding of a million worldly ecstacies into a momentary heaven. Again she attempted to remove her hand; it was held as in a vice, and crushed tightly to his pulsing breast. "Maurice!" murmured she admonishingly, "release me—the time—the place.—"

"The time and place are fitting, Rosetta!" pleaded Severgn. "They have made themselves! There is naught but yourself and mysterious nature to hear me! Let my vow be written among the most holy of the holies. You have known me since the first days of early June. You have certainly noted my attention. I have tried in all ways known to me to tell you my thoughts."

"And I have read them often, often dear Maurice!" meditatively replied Rosetta.

"Then answer me, Rosetta. You say you believe in God and in heaven; you say you believe in these holy things spoken of by the devout; then it is before such a tribunal I unbosom my most secret thoughts. Let it be enscrolled above, that I love you best—dearest! And though you crush me with negation Rosetta, yet shall I love you!"

"Maurice!" exclaimed Rosetta, struggling in mind and body. But still Severgn held her to his bosom;

for to release Rosetta now, Severgn thought was to loose her. Submit to such a fate? No! "Tell me, Rosetta, that you love me, say at least you will try to love me!"

His face was near hers. She grasped both his temples in her hands and drawing him to her, looked him in the face and said—"I will answer you Maurice—some day—but not now. Come, the sun is sinking in the west and the shadows are creeping through the woodland. Come, let us be away!"

Oh, the exultation of the moment! The passionate sense of possession! Severgn could scarcely restrain himself.

"You will then think of me—you will answer me?" asked he.

"I will," answered Rosetta.

In a short time they had gathered up the flowers and took themselves slowly back through the dark woodland in the direction of the carriage.

They proceeded leisurely homeward; and in the space of a half hour later the suburbs of the city was seen through the distant embrasure of the hills as the sun sent its long slanting beams of golden light against the steeples and glinting window panes.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

AN AWAKENED CONSCIENCE.

LATE that evening Maurice Severgn found himself sitting alone in his library room. In his hand he held a photograph of Rosetta. It was an artistic reproduction of Rosetta as Severgn had first seen her in her costume under the enchanting glamour of Edwin Forrest's Othello. Every detail of that evening again came back to him defined and increased in the intensity of its loveliness, its passion, by the experience of the day that had just passed.

To the critical eyes of Severgn, in vain had the artist striven to reproduce the tall, symmetrical form of Rosetta, in which every harmony seemed to blend. The contour of her face, brow and neck were fairly well outlined and shaded, but the exquisite fairness of the skin which glowed with life, vivacity, passion ; the brow, the eyes, the visage in which were written feminine sentiment and delicate thought ; the luxurious growth of auburn hair which was always so admired by Severgn, had certainly defied the skill of the artist.

Rosetta was now perhaps about twenty years of age. She had developed into a young woman of more than average height and size, and her well rounded form produced that statesque symmetry so admired by men like Severgn, whose appreciation of physical beauty was as critical as his sense was exacting of all

that is required in woman's mind and affections to make of them delightful companions for life.

It was upon these imagined excellencies of Rosetta that Severgn was now dreaming as the time glided on into the night. In front of him upon his desk sat a large bronze lamp which shed its subdued beams about the library room through a silken shade. When Severgn arose to depart for his own room his eyes chanced to alight upon a small article of jewelry which lay at the base of the lamp. It was a gold locket attached to a thin gold chain. There was a momentary pause and a look of surprise. It was the locket which he had opened to the eyes of Vulcan the slave. "The lost has been found!" exclaimed he seating himself again and picking up the locket and chain.

This bit of jewelry had been lost for several days and though diligent search had been made, nobody had been able to find it. Hanging to the slender chain the locket dangled in the light, turning first one side then another as Severgn's eyes carefully inspected its surface for possible marks of injury. He then opened it and holding it in the palm of his hand sat meditatively feasting his eyes upon the miniature which it contained—the lineaments of a young woman equally as beautiful as the face of Rosetta. Unconsciously to Severgn, the photograph of Rosetta slipped from between his fingers and fell upon the rug at his feet, whilst in slow, solemn soliloquy he addressed the silent shadows about him—seemingly to break the bonds that pinioned him. "One whole summer slipping idly by, and nothing done!" murmured he—

"Weeks, months, years dropping from the dial of time! And thus my love for one has begun to smother my love for another." He paused; and after pressing the miniature to his lips, he laid it gently upon the desk, resting his forehead in the palm of his hand with his elbow near the base of the lamp. For a moment his eyes fixed themselves sadly upon the upturned face of the photograph at his feet, then again wandered off into vacancy. "Cruel, forgetful son that I am!" murmured he, "I had almost forgotten that there was another void--deep, deep void in my heart!"

For some time he sat looking into vacancy. Presently, he again picked up the locket and pressed the miniature to his lips; then withdrawing it, held it in the palm of his hand before his fastened gaze.

"Sweet, mysterious face," soliloquized he to himself. "Silent, speechless face! Oh, that I could fathom thy secret! For one ray of truth—what would I give! Shall I ever stand where the truth shall fall upon me? Shall I ever know thy mysterious sorrow? What demon haunted thy young steps to thy untimely grave? Oh, mother, mother, I adore thee! I who child-like kissed those lips in life and nestled upon thy breast—thou who art now dead, thou whose gentle motherly eyes have looked upon me from impenetrable space these many years—if so the soul again may live—hear me again! I renew my vows to thee. Thy son shall hunt out thy enemy. He shall learn thy last resting place. Thy grave shall he make holy with his tears!"

Thus strangely mused Severgn looking sadly upon

the open locket; then laid it carefully down upon the cloth near the base of the lamp.

Presently he arose, and going to a cabinet which stood in the corner took therefrom a small box, the lid of which was closely tied with a cord. He brought it forth and again taking his seat by the desk began slowly unbinding the cord which held it. He raised the lid and took from the interior of the box some papers which were neatly folded; all of which were written upon. The outside was a blank and was used only as a wrapper. It showed signs of unmistakable age. He held the written document in his hand and began slowly to read the faded words. It ran as follows:

"Oh, my son, my child, my darling babe! If chance shall let you live and it becomes your fate to look upon this, your mother's last request, press it to your heart, my child, for she who wrote it shall then be far, far away. Oh dear, dear little babe, I hope you may never know the sorrow which preyed upon your mother's heart, nor ever know the bitter tears shed by her in hours of torture. I leave you, my child, in the tender care of those I love. My directions have been given them. They love and cherish my memory; they will likewise guide you. Obey them, my child, for through their lips shall I speak.

"Seek not to inquire into thy mother's destiny. It shall be of no purpose! It shall be sealed even from those who know and love me now in life. Oh, pretty child, even as I write I see thy innocent laugh, and through the blind tears which veil my eyes I seek to

read thy destiny; but it is a sterile, sterile future into which I look. Oh, God protect thy footsteps! I shall look upon thee; I shall be always with thee, though unseen.

"My boy, my child, my darling offspring, my care, my life—"

The paper dropped from Severgn's hand; he buried his face in his arms and fell upon the desk. His eyes were wet with mist—manly bitter sadness struggling from his eyes at the touch of this sad appeal. "My mother! my darling mother!" groaned he.

After a time he again pursued the wild disconnected thoughts on the faded page. He read on and on until he had finished. It was plain that this document had now awakened the very depths of his soul. Many times had he read that page and poured over its mysterious importation. He had wept ere this for the secrets which its dark wailings enfolded. Yea more! He had striven to hunt out the truth—to unlock the secret; though over and over again had he read the command, "seek not to inquire into thy mother's destiny."

For at least a half hour Severgn walked the floor in meditation—his arms folded upon his breast and his head bent down. By times he murmured inaudibly to himself. Again he picked up the paper and began to read slowly line by line, word by word, weighing and analyzing each fractional part. He was reading the last words of Louise Pollard. The document, the locket and chain, and the small box, were the same handed to Father Jerome upon that fatal hour in the

Old Provost by that most unfortunate soul, Louise. In the bottom of this box was also a plain gold ring. It was the same which had been exhumed from Washington Square and which we will recollect finally fell into the hands of Father Jerome.

Finally the midnight hour arrived, and Severgn, weary with the bewildering thoughts presented by the problem of Louise Pollard, retired to his couch where his bright dreams of Rosetta were disturbed by foreboding shadows.

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Thoughtful, reclusive characters like Maurice Severgn are seldom given credit for depth of feeling; but they more than others, are frequently most capable of sounding the depths of the human heart.

Severgn's love for Rosetta was increasing; therefore had it become painful for him to realize that what he possessed was but visionary and intangible. By no means had he conquered—by no means was he certain of Rosetta's heart.

Severgn had not yet learned the secret of Rosetta's life. Rosetta's consciousness of this fact gave her great distress when she awakened to a full sense of Severgn's devotion. Finally the hour came when she must speak.

It was a twilight evening hour in the first days of September. Rosetta and Severgn were slowly strolling beneath the elms which lined the gravel walk in front of the North home.

"Yes, Rosetta," remarked Severgn, "I am serious

this evening, as you say. Phantoms, dreams, and over-shadowing presentiments awakened my pillow through the night, and I have suffered till this moment, till I had unbosomed the secret of my life to you; till I had thrown off the false mantel under which the world knows me. Yes, I have revealed to you my true self."

Rosetta was hushed in silent meditation; for Severgn had just finished a complete disclosure of the secret of his life.

"Rosetta," continued Severgn, "love makes mutual but willing confidants of his victims—a just provision of all-wise nature. The passion which I have conceived for you, Rosetta, is a religion. I bring this life-secret as tribute to the shrine of my idolatry. I ask no recompence, no renewal of plighted love. I simply bring that which I owe."

"An excellence of your nature, I had never known, had you not spoken!" exclaimed Rosetta. "Think not that this bit of confidence shall lead to disaffection. There is a nobility in the act which no woman's heart if true can well forget."

"Sweet Rosetta," murmured Severgn, kissing her hand, "it is not a deep and troubled sea into which I have lead our souls. It is a blank and uninteresting secret—void, utterly void, save to those whose hearts are touched with the mutuality of love."

"Maurice," murmured Rosetta, raising her proud head with confidence, whilst her deep eyes fell upon his, "were it deep, boundless, yes storm-ridden and dark as the ocean, yet should my heart remain unshaken in confidence."

There was then a deep silence during which Rosetta thought—"Oh, delicious fate! how sublime it is to be beloved!" Then her heart was slightly touched with the romantic—"But Maurice!" began she, "this is not all. You have memories to unfold—sorrows, joys, adventures?"

"Yes, many, Rosetta. But first, I would have you look at this," answered Severgn, handing Rosetta the locket and pointing to the miniature within.

"Your mother?" quickly inquired Rosetta, holding the picture close to her eyes as they stood for a moment in the twilight in which the lineaments of the face of Louise were dimly traceable.

"My mother," answered Severgn. "Poor unfortunate woman! was she not beautiful, Rosetta?"

"Very beautiful, Maurice," murmured Rosetta, "have you any memories of her?"

"None, Rosetta," sadly answered Severgn. "Listen, Rosetta! Briefly my story is this. My childhood experience began in the city of New York. It seems that at the period of my mother's mysterious death—I say mysterious, for here the clouds begin which extend backward over the entire sphere of her life—I was placed in the charge of some one who deserted me, or died and left me. This is not well established. My own memory alone is here my guide. I remember but the faintest traces now of that existence. I recollect an old, old woman with pinched face and withered chin, for whom, to the best of my judgment, I must have served the function of a paper peddler; for I recollect of standing upon the corners

for hours at a time with a bundle of newspapers under my arms, selling a two penny edition of some paper, perhaps the Advertiser, but as regards the name I am not certain. The next epoch of my career which is indelible in my memory is this: One day I returned home—I could not have been much beyond five years of age—I found the house alone. I wept and cried myself to sleep only to awaken and find I was deserted. Here begins a career which spreads over the space of four or five years filled as you have said with adventure. I shall not now attempt to recount that life in its wild, strange and at times really horrible detail. I joined a pack of vagabonds, youths of my age and older who acquired a living by begging, pilfering, rag picking, selling papers and blacking boots, what time we were out of the hands of the authorities. In the summer season we lived under old stoops and slept in boxes or upon the earth just as the night happened to overtake us, and in winter we managed to find a deserted garret, and sometimes charity opened its door to us. In this manner time slipped by until the eventful day of my career came.

"Some petty misdemeanors had been committed, the guilt of which had been fastened upon me and my associates. We were all arrested; and thus were the facts of our horrible poverty and wretched existence first brought to the eyes of the proper authority. Shortly after this I found myself duly installed as an inmate of an orphan's home. The full details of this episode were published in the dailies; my particular case as I afterwards learned, having aroused much

comment, for my situation in life then was certainly most peculiar. I had no memory of father or mother. My precarious living had been picked up in the mysterious ways known only to the gammon thus thrown upon the mercies of chance. Through the wreck of misfortune, out from the oblivion which encompassed me, there was but one thing which survived. It was my name—Maurice Pollard. This had been bandied from ear to ear among my associates until it had become fixed—the slender tie which in the dark mystery of my past united me to destiny. For, Rosetta do you know, that destiny in life is fixed and immutable as the law of the planets!"

"It is," murmured Rosetta with her eyes fastened on the vacant shadows.

"One day a very old man came to see me. He brought a small box which to my surprise he said had been left for me by my mother. The contents of this box I will some day reveal to you. Among other things was the chain and locket. This old man himself is also a mystery to me. For he came but once and left no trace by which he could be identified."

Rosetta and Severgn had entered the yard and for some time had been seated on one of the rustic benches.

"Shortly after this the fortune of my life dawned upon me. A lady who was visiting at the home, observing some peculiar trait in me that pleased her—forthwith adopted me as her child. Her name was Madam Eugene Severgn. Several years after this Madam Severgn took me to Europe, where for the space of about ten years we sojourned, living in various

cities. However into this part of my career I shall not at this time enter as it pertains much to the life of that kind woman who has so tenderly fostered me."

"And is the life of your mother an entire blank to you?" inquired Rosetta.

"The facts surrounding her life could not be less known than are they to her son—I, Maurice Pollard, now Maurice Severgn. Of late this has given me no little pain and torment. I have grown a fondly desire to learn all that I can of her career. This desire has received a new awakening since I have met you, Rosetta; for love arouses the dormant virtues of men and causes them to think of things unknown to the dispassionate. I feel that I cannot rest well till I have found where she died. There is a void, a deep, fathomless void in my nature, Rosetta. I must fill it. I must seek out the lonely grave and the history of her who rocked me and bore me in her motherly arms. I cannot longer live happily upon this border land of oblivion. I must know! and I have already instituted search.

"From the earliest of my recollection I have been accustomed to look upon my mother's mystery as an enigma which was forever to defy explanation. Indeed the solemn fact of her absence so permeated my nature from the very first that until maturer years, I did not question, I did not appreciate the darkness which settled about my cradle. Rosetta, I was as a child upreared by the side of the sounding sea, whose immensity being forever before me, had for years obliterated a

dream of some day crossing it. Always looking upon the enigma as combining all that is dark and immeasurable, transcending my power to decipher, it was late in life before I thought of exploration. But one day the enthusiasm burst over me, as in the life of the sailor-boy living near the main, a tingling of the blood, a boundless desire to cross that unexplored something before me. And, Rosetta, I have set my sail upon that sea, to ride into its billows and its storm, if need be! I say billows and storm, Rosetta; for already I have more than once felt the dark presentiment of my undertaking."

It can well be imagined that the peculiar career of Rosetta had fitted her mind to grasp the pictures portrayed by Severgn. She herself had known the pang of orphanage. She herself had tasted the bitter bread of poverty; she had longings and palpitations and desires like his own. Their hearts knew a responsive unison.

When Severgn had finished, there was a long silence—bitter moments for Rosetta. Her mind was struggling with indecision; the inexorable knowledge that Severgn was waiting for reply; the secret misgivings as to what effect a revelation of her true individuality would produce in Severgn's mind, his ideal of her now being sweetened and purified by her present environment; and even more apprehensive, painful, yea, distracting!—intermingling with these thoughts also arose horrible reflections concerning Severgn himself. For in all the interesting reminiscence related by Mrs. North to Rosetta, could it be

possible that the story of Louise Pollard would have been omitted? Was she not at this moment in possession of the secret of Severgn's lineage? "God pity this noble being, if what I now mistrust be true!—and God pity us both!" ruminated Rosetta, whilst her heart quivered and shrank at the admonishing touch of an apalling fate, a glimpse of which now seemed to awaken by the presence of mysterious ties that linked both her and Maurice Severgn to the curse that had alighted upon Louise Pollard.

"You say you do not remember his name?" tremblingly questioned Rosetta.

"Whose name, Rosetta?" after a moment inquired Severgn.

"The old man who gave you the box."

"No, Rosetta. The Home kept no record of his visit. Why do you inquire?"

Rosetta did not answer.

The conversation sank into silence. Both their brows were encircled with an atmosphere of dubious prophesy—the pulsations of Infinite intuition swept through the mind of Rosetta. A perspiration started from her brow, and a chilly sensation crept over her body. For an instant their thoughtful eyes looked into each other. "What's the matter, Rosetta?" inquired Severgn. "If it be true!" gasped Rosetta, "my God! Maurice," exclaimed she falling upon his neck in an agony of despair. "No, no, it cannot be!" added she, burying her face in her hands as if to hide from her view some horrible apparition.

"Rosetta—" slowly and sadly remarked Severgn,

believing that his account of himself was the cause of Rosetta's misery—"I have done you wrong! I confess it Rosetta; I confess it. We had best part. I have done you wrong!" Severgn with a sigh arose to depart.

"No, no! Maurice. I would not have you leave me!" exclaimed Rosetta almost maddened by conflicting thoughts as she grasped Severgn's hand in her own.

"The fault is with me, Rosetta," lowly remarked Severgn.

"No, it is not that," answered Rosetta struggling through her painful emotions—"No, not that."

"Then you do not love me?" inquired Severgn—"Rosetta, am I to drift along in this daily, nightly pain of suspense?"

"Maurice, in which do women most dissemble, their tongues or their eyes, their words or their acts? The affections seldom wait upon words and the cold forms of speech."

The place where they now stood near the rustic bench was embowered in vines and overhanging trees. Slowly the moon had arisen from behind the horizon like a great disk of golden fire filling all space with her mellow light and awakening the sleeping flowers that at sunset had closed their drowsy tubes. On the light wings of the evening air was wafted to them the mingling perfume of vines and blossoms. Above their heads stretched the vast amethyst dome of the sky. In it here and there silently floated small filmy clouds between which the eyes alighted upon vast fields of

space twinkling with countless stars like burning coals.

How impossible it is to express the first delicate speech of love's subtle spirit! The trivial commonplace things of life are all quite important in its dialogue. Entire days are wasted away in weaving its fabric, so perishable that it frequently fades from the mind whilst the sound is yet fresh upon the ear, leaving only in memory the delicious essence of its unsubstantial dream. Though much of the summer that had just passed had been in this manner absorbed, Rosetta and Severgn had now entered a realm where the dreams of sentiment are vitalized into reality and shadow become substance. Wisdom halts upon the threshold of futurity and takes counsel with itself.

"Rosetta." continued Severgn, "before I had met you, I had dedicated my life to the mysteries of science and the cold ideality of philosophy. In the temple of the mind I had discovered a Goddess. That Goddess was nature. I loved, I adored, I worshiped her. I was most happy. To-day, I again enter that temple—I am amazed—I am blinded with doubt, with wretchedness. Fate has stretched forth her ruthless hand. My idol lies shattered on the floor; my religion has become a myth; my faith bends like a reed in the breeze; my vows, which I had considered adamant, blaze and perish like wisps of straw!"

Rosetta was silent. She was thinking of her past —of Camillo, of Cavilazo, of Bianco, and by times arose a sinister shadow of Louise Pollard.

"Rosetta, are you deaf to my appeal—are you

blind to the sacrifice I have made for you? An entire summer has now been dreamed away. The dust of unuse is slowly mantling my library. I have lost all ambition but to follow you."

"No, Maurice, I am not blind to this sacrifice," replied Rosetta with voice much disturbed. "I would have you exalted—noble, prosperous in all ideals of your life; in a word, I—leave me till to-morrow Maurice! I will answer you; I have much to tell you!" exclaimed Rosetta struggling from him.

"Rosetta—" slowly spake Severgn, "thus has it ever been since first I foolishly confided to you!" Severgn had misunderstood Rosetta. He arose with his hat in his hand and was slowly walking away. Rosetta was disturbed. Her heart throbbed with pain and fear. Pain—because she loved Severgn and stood trembling on the brink where one word from her lips would transform the maidenish essence of her being. Fear—for the certainty that Maurice was unconscious of the history of her life; and appalling event to her imagination! the story of Louise Pollard was known to her.

The dim form of Severgn was slowly receding from her. "Maurice!" exclaimed Rosetta, painfully recalling him. Severgn halted and slowly turned around. Rosetta stood but a step away—her arms extended in appeal to him; upon her face was written fear and grief. It penetrated Severgn's heart like a blade. "Rosetta!" passionately exclaimed he, clasping her in his arms—"Maurice," struggled Rosetta. "You would not leave me thus without a cause?"

Severgn looked down into her face tenderly, but with wonder and apprehension; for in the cadence of her voice, in the sudden transition of her broken spirit, he read the unmistakable presence of a heart rent and torn with secret anguish.

"Forgive me Maurice! I should have spoken. There are secrets in my life's history which ere this I should have divulged to you. But only till this very instant—believe me—when I saw your form silently withdrawing from me, my conscience smote me!"

"Conscience! Rosetta," exclaimed Severgn holding her in his arms and looking into her upturned face upon which the moonlight playing through the leaves fell in a peculiar halo of beauty melting into a pale gold upon her soft tresses. "Conscience?" inquired he in painful wonder.

"Yes!" answered Rosetta, "painful conscience! that in silence I have seen you writhe and struggle. Briefly that I have seen your soul enkindle upon a deception—that he whom I have loved when the solemn fate of my woman's heart tortured me into silence; that you, Maurice, have so long been denied the confidence which I owed you!"

At that very instant Rosetta had resolved to forget that she had ever heard the story of Louise Pollard. She would sacrifice herself upon the altar of love. "Be seated. I will tell you all," continued she. "It may disturb your devotion. If so; then let it be."

"Rosetta," answered Severgn, "I now divine the cause of your trouble." Rosetta looked anxiously into Severgn's face, when Severgn lowly continued. "It

was but this day that I learned the secret of your life. Rosetta, for the love I bear you allow no disturbing thought to give you pain from such a cause!"

For a moment Rosetta was silent. "Then you know who I am?" questioned she.

"I do. And to-morrow I shall prove it! Be ready to meet me in the morning at nine. I want you to become acquainted with Madam Severgn."

"I will be ready. I will go with you. But how came you to learn this? Did you know Camillo?"

"Camillo! no. Nor did I know Cavilazo. But I know of your past relationship to them. Rosetta, I will not now go into detail. Rest till to-morrow. Sincerely I ask you—throw away sorrow! Grief is a poisonous mixture, and flowing through our veins breaks down the centers of life."

CHAPTER XXXV.

ROSETTA MEETS MADAM SEVERGN.

SO hastily now do the interesting events in the experience of Rosetta and Severgn rush upon each other that no time can here be given to the narration of the preliminary footsteps in Rosetta's formal introduction to Madam Severgn

It can be well imagined that Rosetta omitted no feature of dress that in her modest and artistic mind would enhance her loveliness. Besides this that morning she found herself buoyant and filled with life and happiness. And though specially retiring and modest

in her deportment when conversing with dignified ladies like Madam Severgn, Rosetta displayed a vivacity of speech which was an index to her openess and honesty of heart. Besides all this, Madam Severgn's reverence for the judgment of Maurice had already prejudiced her mind in favor of Rosetta; and accordingly the few conventional formalities which prefaced their conversation soon passed when they found themselves communing with interest upon topics which brought them into a close sympathy of understanding. After some half hour Madam and Rosetta had arisen and were proceeding slowly from one apartment to another—which was Madam's custom with rare visitors, interesting them with her many pieces of art, pictures, books, cabinets, relics, etc. Nearly one hour was thus consumed when Madam and Rosetta entered the library apartment where they ran upon Maurice who had been engaged in some business correspondence.

Suddenly the door bell rang and in a few moments Belshazzar appeared with the card of a visitor. "Seat the gentleman in the parlor," directed Severgn handing the card to Madam for her inspection. "Rosetta, I would be pleased to have you meet with us," remarked Severgn arising with a knowing glance at Madam.

Although entirely ignorant of the detail of Rosetta's history Madam had learned through Maurice that Rosetta was an adopted daughter of Mrs. North, and that when a child Rosetta had been in some way associated with an Italian by the name of Camillo. Though Madam had deeply pitied Rosetta for her misfortune

as a child she at first was not entirely pleased that Maurice had cast his lot with Rosetta whose early training had been left to the care of an unknown Italian. However, had not Rosetta's personality itself now entirely dispersed this slight cloud the unquestioned social standing of the Norths would have done so.

"This is Mr. Hinds, I believe," remarked Severgn who for a moment had excused himself from the presence of Madam and Rosetta and had entered the parlor.

"It is, sir," replied the visitor arising. His style of dress and easy deportment announced the fact that he was a man of experience.

"Be seated, sir. You have the watch, have you, and your official credentials?"

"I have, Mr. Severgn. Here are the credentials," replied the gentleman as he handed some papers to Severgn which had been carefully secured with a wax seal. The visitor then leaned his heavy frame in the comfortable chair in which he had been seated and casually stroking his mustache he busied himself with the interesting features of the room.

After reading the credentials Severgn tapped a small bell to his right which instantly brought Belshazzar. "Tell Madam and Rosetta that we are ready," directed Severgn to the slave. "In the course of our conversation I want you to very carefully observe the expression of the young woman, Mr. Hinds," remarked Severgn.

Presently Severgn arose and presented Madam

Severgn and Rosetta. After a few brief remarks all became seated.

It was evident that business of great moment was then contemplated, for Madam momentarily excusing herself glanced over the papers which Severgn had handed to her whilst Severgn after having carefully closed all the doors engaged the minds of Rosetta and the visitor with various light talk.

"The papers are entirely satisfactory are they not, Maurice?" presently inquired Madam.

"Entirely." Then directing the conversation, Severgn began—"In our opinion, Mr. Hinds, the most remarkable feature of the process of detection is to be seen in the persistence with which the company have pursued this matter throughout the ten or more years that have elapsed since first they took the case in charge. The last five years have been wrapped in such total darkness that we had abandoned all hope—"

"No, not abandoned! dear Maurice," sadly interrupted Madam—"the hope of a woman's heart burns like the sacred lights of a temple, never dying!"

"Ah, mother, I confess it. I was wrong," replied Maurice.

Rosetta's curiosity was aroused. Was not this very eccentric of Maurice to thus lay bare a family secret in her presence? Thus ruminated Rosetta.

"You see, Mr. Severgn," began the gentleman, "when our company once books a crime the eye of vigilance is never again released till the hour of capture and conviction."—Rosetta's eyes were fastened upon the speaker."—Every fact or slightest clue is

carefully set down as time rolls on. Periodically there is a complete revision and compilation of all testimony from which every agent in the employ of the company is at liberty to forecast his particular theory. Thus you see, that throughout the course of many years the silent footsteps of justice tracks 'the suspect' steadily from state to state, from country to country—perhaps around the entire globe."

Madam Severgn nor Maurice made no reply. The gentleman then proceeded in strange fashion, at intervals taking mental note of Rosetta. "In the year of 1845 the dead body of a man is found upon the beach of the lake at New Orleans. He has been strangled, and robbed of jewelry and money. His child, an infant daughter who had been in his company that afternoon, has also disappeared."—Rosetta quivered. —"Certain 'suspects' who were known to hold close relation with each other suddenly disappeared. Suspicion attaches more conclusively. 'A,' who has gone to Cuba is captured and returned on extradition. Investigation reveals no conviction. 'A' is then released. But a careful watch is kept upon his future movements. One day, four years later, 'B,' who is certainly identified as one of the original 'suspects,' is suddenly discovered in the city of St. Louis. He is now a mendicant troubadour. His wanderings are followed, his actions observed. Finally we have him arrested upon pretext of misdemeanor. He is examined; a record is kept but nothing material has been revealed. Again he disappears. Then several years roll by yielding nothing. Finally the case has begun

to be calendared among the hopeless. Suddenly there has been enacted a tragedy in an obscure settlement of Cincinnati. Upon investigation certain people are implicated. Who are they? One is Camillo and the other is Cavilazo."—Madam Severgn glanced at Rosetta—"And another is a youth, who although too young to have been implicated in the first crime, could undoubtedly give some important information concerning it. But where is he? Gone! vanished, leaving no trace of himself; save that after the crime, he became sole proprietor of Camillo's fruit-booth—runs the business for two years; becomes smitten with an Italian lass by the name of Creta Majellica, takes her and is gone. Vanishes like smoke!"

Severgn looked at Rosetta. She had become pale. Her eyes were turned in the direction of the face of the speaker. Her spirit writhed and strove to cry out. But the revelation had petrified her speech. Madam Severgn had not observed Rosetta. Maurice was about to speak when the gentleman continued—"Two years more roll by. Cavilazo is discovered. He is questioned. 'Camillo has gone to Italy,' replies Cavilazo. Of the girl he declares he knows nothing."

Rosetta's heart had almost ceased to act and she had grown paler. In vain did her agonized will struggle to release her mind. Momentary paralysis had seized her tongue. "And thus," continued the gentleman, "again we are in total darkness—the flame is extinguished, the moth set flying in the free air."

The speaker now stopped for reply. "And is this all?" inquired Severgn.

"No," answered the gentleman carelessly bringing a gold watch from his pocket, continuing—"This article of jewelry was lately found at a pawn-shop in the city of St. Louis."—Madam Severgn started as her eyes fell upon the watch.—"Be composed Madam!" remarked the gentleman. "Listen. On the interior of this case is found the inscription quoted in our letter to you. Investigation reveals the remarkable fact that Cavilazo was the individual who disposed of this watch. Question—did he obtain it from Camillo? We shall see. Very well—Camillo is now in Italy. Bianco the youth is somewhere in St. Louis. We will locate him in due time. But where now is Cavilazo? When we have located *him* we will also have Bianco. Then both shall be arrested upon charges of crime committed five years ago; and Madam, I will prophesy that the evidence will disclose the fact, that Camillo took your child to Italy."

Rosetta was seen to arise gasping for breath and struggling to speak. In a moment she hysterically cried. "No! No! I am the child—Madam's daughter! Do you not recognize me mother? I am Rosetta, your child. My God, my father's likeness!" screamed Rosetta pointing to a painting upon the wall—"Save me Maurice, for I shall go mad!"

Severgn sprang forward and supported Rosetta's sinking body. For a moment there was an awful silence. Madam Severgn stood gazing upon this scene like a statue.

"My child! my child!" presently exclaimed she, wildly throwing her arms about both her children

—"My children! my happy children!" The facts that Severgn had related to Madam concerning Rosetta, when added to the revelation just submitted by Mr. Hinds, made it clear beyond any possible doubt in the mind of each that Rosetta was the child of Madam Severgn.

When the shock produced by this sudden disclosure had partly passed away Rosetta in tears and quivering with the excitement of the moment hastily revealed to the astonished ears of all, her marvelous escape from Camillo and likewise her escape from the horrible slave life into which Camillo had bargained to sell her. When she had finished her brief account, Mr. Hinds remarked—"It is settled. The capture of these men will lead to conviction. They murdered Eugene Severgn for the jewelry and money he was then known to have in his possession, then abducted the child in hope of securing heavy ransom for her. But the authorities moved too precipitably and the case was lost in the hasty flight of these guilty men. Cavilazo may yet be captured, but Camillo is likely beyond our reach—"

"Leave them to the misery of their guilty conscience and the judgment of God!" interrupted Madam Severgn who was weeping.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A TEMPEST.

AS hastily as possible the news was carried to the home of Dr. North. But the fate of Maurice Severgn denies us the right to tarry in the midst of Madam Severgn's joy and the commotion produced in the minds of Doctor and Mistress North.

Arrangements were immediately in order for Rosetta to take up her home with her newly found mother. The painful but joyful separation between her and her foster parents swiftly approached.

It was upon the threshold of these things that the tempest, which for so many years had been gathering, broke above the head of Severgn.

However, there could be no happier ending to the remarkable episode just related than that which fate itself so far seemed to shape—the marriage of Maurice and Rosetta. In due time arrangements were therefore being made for the realization of this beautiful event. But woe for Rosetta and Severgn. It is not given to the human mind to quite penetrate the mysterious veil of the to-morrow! Serenely happy in the sweet contemplation of his present fate Severgn had momentarily banished from his mind the forebodings that of late the Mystery of Louise Pollard had awakened. In the afternoon of the fourth day succeeding the episode just related Severgn had come on some casual mission to the home of Doctor North. Severgn knew absolutely nothing concerning the

family history of the Norths and was entirely careless upon this subject.

It will now be recalled that this was the fall of 1860, a very stormy era in the history of America. The most exciting presidential campaign in the history of the United States was then at the climax of intensity. The Democratic party after controlling the destiny of the Nation for sixty years, excepting a temporary overthrow in 1840, had now broken into fragments and was destined to be routed in the coming election. The leaders of the Southern faction of this now dismembered party declared that the election of Lincoln, the choice of the People's party, would be a just cause for the destruction of the Union.

Maurice Severgn and Doctor North had been conversing for a half hour or more, and finally the subject matter drifted into the political topics of the hour—the presidential election, the questions at issue, the triangular national fight then on, the result if Lincoln were elected, the final and ultimate results of the slave question and many other phases of the political disturbance of that time.

They were now seated in the study. Dr. North was leisurely cleansing some surgical instruments and Severgn whilst keeping up his side of the conversation was perusing a book of surgical sketches, the pride of Dr. North's possessions; for these sketches were the product of the Doctor's own pencil—having been executed whilst in college some thirty years previous.

As Doctor North cast his eyes upon the sketches his mind was suddenly carried back to the early exper-

ience of his life. "Talking of these features of slavery and looking again upon those old sketches Severgn, reminds me of an experience of my own, which occurred about the time those sketches which you are now looking upon were executed," began Dr. North slightly in emotion. "Turn to page twelve—you will see a sketch I wish to refer to."

In a moment Severgn found the sketch and looked up in token of his desire to hear the experience related.

The sketch referred to was that of a human heart. It illustrated that organ divided in halves, each half being pinned back to show the interior—the valves, the cavities and ventricles, etc. The great artery and part of its branch was also displayed. The entire sketch presented remarkable delicacy in outline and wonderful minuteness of detail.

"There!" exclaimed Doctor North, looking upon the sketch (the picture was done in appropriate colors) "that heart has an interesting history! It once beat in the breast of one of those same unhappy creatures of whom we have been speaking. However, I have always doubted the charge in her particular case. I have always regarded her as a victimized woman; for she certainly bore no perceptible evidences upon her body of such a curse; and yet the circumstantial evidence was convincing."

Severgn's eyes arose from the sketch inquiringly to the speaker's face, then dropped dubiously upon the floor. For but a few moments previously Doctor North in the course of casual conversation had told Severgn

that Mrs. North's maiden name was Jerome. The memory of this name now arose momentarily in Severgn's mind causing silent reflections; for this name also appeared in the sacred papers left by his mother.

Doctor North continued—"See, here is an old scalpel which was used by me in the dissection of that heart." The Doctor handed Severgn a surgical knife which had evidently seen much use. "Take it, Doctor!" exclaimed Severgn laying it quickly back in the morocco case among its fellow instruments—"The sight of these things are unpleasant."

"Well, that scalpel arouses unpleasant memories in my mind also. The dissection of that heart would never have occurred had I at that time known its origin. But I did not. Being a natural draftsman, I was fond of sketching the anatomy of the human body, as this custom was a great assistance to me in surgery One day a student brought me a heart and—not now desiring to go farther in detail—that colored sketch was the result. You will observe that the features are brought out with great care and minuteness."

The Doctor had not observed the pallor that was creeping over Severgn's face, but went on with his narrative at the same time polishing the surgical instruments and depositing them again in their case. "One morning I was suddenly called to the hospital—I was then an attendant physician—if I recollect rightly it was in the month of May. The being I had been summoned to attend was a woman who was then perhaps in her twenty-fifth year. I listened to the story

of those who were in attendance—she was then dying. Of this I was quite certain from the color of the eyes and the uneven beat of the heart. I was told that she had been rescued early that morning from the mouth of Peckslip, where she had undoubtedly gone to end that misery which we know is the most unutterably horrible of all the attending terrors of the American slave system. Bright, happy, thoughtless woman—she had one day discovered her curse. The negro pigment in her veins had been suddenly disclosed to her, and under the consternation of the shock she had fled. More bitter than this—poor thing—she had been pursued."

Dr. North was still ignorant of the effect that his story was having upon Severgn. Severgn felt a sinking, a terror—an unutterable terror! But he said nothing. His eyes were fixed upon the floor changing from place to place in vacant fear. Unconsciously he had rigidly clasped the sides of his chair like one who has prepared himself to undergo a painful operation; or perhaps like him who is condemned to the block.

"She had been once overtaken," unconsciously continued the Doctor, "but releasing herself, again she had fled and being pursued finally took refuge in death. Brave, magnanimous woman! She had died to save her child. I knew that she was then nursing an infant, and feared lest she had drowned it also. I questioned her. Strange to say she opened her eyes. She seemed to revive. I was persuaded that she understood me. "Your child—is it still alive?" asked I. There was a faint trace of response in her lips and

her eyes gently opened. We gathered courage and thought she could be saved. I placed my ear close to her lips and spoke. She answered. But it was the whisper of the departing. Scarcely audible it said: 'I have saved my child.' Once more the breast heaved —the quick, spasmodic heave of death and she was no more."

The face of the listener was ghastly. He had changed position on his chair. "Why, Severgn, you are affected!" cried the Doctor approaching Severgn. "Slightly, slightly, Doctor, I admit it—but proceed! What became of the body?—to the last—let me hear it all! You do not understand—but it compares horribly with—well—but no matter. Make haste! What was done?" responded Severgn, with vain attempt to hide the wild emotion of his breast, and the maddening presentiments of his brain."

Much worried at the strange action of Severgn, the Doctor nevertheless went on as he was bid; for he had no reason to know the frightful and perhaps fatal picture he was now drawing.

"Well, she was taken to the morgue, where she lay for some four days. During this time I had completed proper arrangements for her decent burial; for sad to relate, I knew much of her personal career. But entirely without my knowledge the body had been purloined into the Medical College and like the bodies of hundreds of the nameless unfortunates found its way to the dissecting table."

Overwhelmed with the approaching bolt, so fatally winged for his breast, Severgn yet clung desperately

to hope—even in the presence of the fiery scintillations which followed in the track of the dart so unconsciously directed upon the citadel of his very life. Her *name* had not yet been heard. In this alone remained one possible chance for his escape.

"For God's sake tell me who this wretched woman was!" cried he. There was an unmistakable wildness in that cadence. The Doctor faltered. He was certain that Severgn had suddenly lost his mind. The eyes were gleaming—unreadably, distractedly gleaming! The ashen face had assumed the expression of one in the writhings of the most frightful of mental agonies. The frenzied voice had brought Mrs. North in excited speed to the room. Severgn had arisen from his chair. "On! Doctor—for God sake why do you stand torturing me with your silence!" The appeal was pitiful. It was terrible—it was wild and rose to a positive shriek. The Doctor was confounded, overwhelmed, bewildered.

"Her name—her name," labored the Doctor, entranced by the face of Severgn, "her name—let me think—she was taken to—her remains, I mean, were interred in Washington Square, the potter's field of that era—her name"—the Doctor was now more occupied with the aspect of Severgn than with what he was saying—"Yes, in potter's field they buried her—after the students had dissected the body—her name—Pollard—Louise Pollard."

"My God, it is true!" gasped Severgn. "Oh! horrible, horrible!"—groaned he, covering his face with his hands as he staggered back into his chair.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

SEVERGN'S RETURN.

ROSETTA had now come to live with her mother. Days of happiness such as it is seldom the lot of mortals were swiftly gliding by. Both families were now quietly preparing for the coming marriage. Two handy sewing women had been employed by Madam Severgn to assist in the completion of the exquisite and very extensive apparel of the bride. One large room had been given over to these women where they closeted themselves and plied their steady tools, stopping only to receive a suggestion from Madam or to consult the opinion of Rosetta, who during the entire process of this responsible task displayed great skill as a seamstress herself, knowing well the fitness of each article, fashion and shade. White silk and masses of delicate lace mingling with a wilderness of fabrics, patterns and partially completed garments were lying here and there about the room.

The return of Severgn from his visit with Doctor North was expected any moment. But how unexpected and terrible was certainly to be the news that he would bring. Madam Severgn herself had never come into possession of this secret phase of the lineage of Maurice the features of which in the minds of the people of those particular times were colored and defined into the most horrible of possible calamities entirely beyond the cure of any human relief.

Rosetta's beauty was specially pronounced on this

day as she was very happy. Her more than average height and her comeliness of body were displayed in exceptional harmonies as by times she posed before the admiring eyes of the sewing women or stood before the great mirror to fit to her body some delicate garment. She had arranged her hair in a heavy coil high upon her head and wore in the side thereof a crescent of diamonds, a memento from Mrs. Doctor North. On the first finger of her left hand she wore a beautiful gem. Sometimes one of the sewing women would say—"Miss Rosetta, do you regard this shade in good taste?" Again—"Are you fond of this lace?" —and so the pretty work, the entrancing task proceeded, awakening in Rosetta's mind innocent visions, holy hopes and anticipations.

In the last few days Madam's heart had emptied itself of years of pent up sorrow. Once when she and Rosetta had been seated in the parlor Madam affectionately murmured as she gently caressed Rosetta—"In the morning of my life, my dear child, you were taken from me; now kind providence has returned you again to shine upon the evening hours of my last days. Oh my child, my sweet babe!"—and again Madam kissed Rosetta and wept as she continued—"Rosetta, from this day forth, the storms which have threatened you shall have blown away. Maurice has a large kind heart. He is strong of body and of mind and you will find him ambitious in life. You are both well equipped for the enjoyment of the paradise into which you are going. I have taught Maurice virtue and goodness of heart. Oh, the joy of this moment,

my child!" Mother and daughter were seated upon the sofa. Rosetta's arm was about her mother's neck, and Madam felt for a moment the return of that unspeakable bliss of maternal adoration, as Rosetta caressed her and hung upon her lap, listening to her sweet motherly and sacred confidence.

The bridal trip by agreement with Madam was not to extend over the space of more than thirty days, after which they—*they!* how much that little word now meant to her—they would return to live like children in the same great house with her. There was more than room within that massive structure for them and her. They could keep secluded for weeks, if so they delighted in the secrecy of their love, and yet live with her.

"Mother," presently remarked Rosetta, "what keeps Maurice? I have looked for him twice." She had also inquired of Belshazzar if anything had yet been seen of Maurice. "It is now five o'clock," added Rosetta, "he was to have been here at half past two!" There was some worry upon Rosetta's face.

A quarter after five arrived and Maurice had not yet appeared. "Mother, dear," complained Rosetta, "Maurice lingers unusually late! Is it common for him to thus delay?"

"Not without good cause, daughter."

"Then there is cause, for he promised faithfully to return at half-past two!" There were tokens of deep apprehension upon Rosetta's brow. Sympathetic, confiding lover as she was, she could not believe that Maurice had thus ruthlessly disappointed her. Pres-

ently she inquired, "I wonder if Belshazzar would be willing to go after Maurice?" Rosetta was not used to the unquestioned obedience and meek submission of slaves.

"*Willing!* child," answered Madam. "He has no will! He knows but obedience." Then Madam tapped a bell and in a few moments Belshazzar appeared, bowed gracefully and stood in readiness to her command.

"Rosetta is somewhat troubled about the delay of Maurice, Belshazzar," remarked Madam.

"Troubled! Miss Rosetta, why have you not spoken?" I will go seek him." Then Belshazzar disappeared.

But time passed on very slowly. In fact, for Rosetta, it dragged! She grew more uneasy. She began to regard the delay of Maurice as inexcusable unless caused by some disaster! In this mode of mind Rosetta finally took herself to the vine-clad porch which opened upon the walk leading through the front yard. Here she lingered toying among the few flowers that still appeared among the October leaves and waited for the appearance of Maurice.

* * * * * * * * *

There are tempests of the soul and there are tempests of elemental nature. The former is not less terrible than the later. Both have their forerunning heralds, their unmistakable tokens, their mutterings, their warnings.

From the day Severgn had met Vulcan he had whisperings within him; he had day dreams—omi-

nous! portentious!—such as come to us from whence we know not but which shake us with ghastly superstitions! Various had been these presentiments, yet for a time had the passion of love submerged them.

The tempest makes itself known in mysterious but unmistakable ways. Sea-birds in hurried flight carry upon their wings the deep sea mutterings. There is a strange odor in the atmosphere of the pampas which the wild horse knows when he flies at the approach of the fire. The rumbling of the tornado is heard by the mimosa hours in advance, and it shuts its leaves and hugs the earth. The migration of birds is prophetic.

Likewise the human soul! It has its presentiments.

Dark forebodings had visited Severgn. Frightful whisperings—reports from the unconscious centers of the brain. Oh that he had heard them in season! Vainly did he push back these tokens! Finally the bolt had burst above his head, and the withering blast of his fate swept like a simoon through his body.

Oh, leprosy of slavery!

What Severgn now experienced had been the fate also of his mother; only hers had been doubly terrible! Louise had heard the clanking chains, the horrible phantom of the block arose before her. She had a child to protect—she had been pursued. The future of Severgn was yet subject to all these terrors, yet by judicious care they might be averted. But were the facts known to the world, the title to his very soul, according to the fixed decrees of the highest tribunal

of the nation, would have become a common merchandise for traffic. The veriest human brute in the land could have been heard in court to prove his title to Severgn and claim him as his chattel.

Louise Pollard had been withered as by a lightning blast. Likewise her son! Slowly the foot-steps of the horrible had approached. One day the earth quivered!—it yawned and Severgn was swallowed up!

Vain was the wild shriek—the despairing effort amidst that chaos! Alone!—all alone upon the desolate heath he stood—his back bent to the inky tempest, night permeating nature, the hurricane abroad, the ribbed and darkling sky sweeping through space!

Such were the reflections—the horrible sensations of Maurice Severgn as he proceeded homeward from Doctor North's.

As he came up the gravel walk of his own home, his heart sank in his breast as he saw Rosetta hurrying forth to meet him. "Why have you done this?" began Rosetta clinging to Severgn's arm whilst at the same time assuming to be greatly offended. "Did you not know that I would worry?—it is unkind!"

"Do not chide me Rosetta!" gently admonished Severgn, endeavoring to smile; but it was a cold, melancholy grimace. The shock which he had received an hour previous had by no means spent itself, and now in the presence of Rosetta his blood turned to an icy current. The fire of his heart seemed to desert its forge. Dr. North had accompanied Severgn as far as he dared and then leaving him in the care of Belshazzar had returned home for fear that his presence would cause a shock.

"Why, Maurice dear, you are ill!" cried Rosetta as she saw for the first time the pallor of Severgn's face.

"But a slight giddiness, a pain about my temples, Rosetta," replied Severgn, as Rosetta and he were ascending the steps.

It was with painful, doubtful moves that he approached that door into which never again thought Severgn could he enter as the Maurice Severgn of yesterday. The dark pigment, the floating blotches of his blood burned in his breast like fiery cinders. He felt them creeping in and out of the pores of his skin. They seemed to search the roots of his very hair, then back again slinking to the heart; then slowly and painfully they searched the uttermost fiber of the tiniest capillary. Cold sweat oozed from his hand, which Rosetta touching, Severgn felt that she had been poisoned. Would she attempt to kiss him? God forbid! He quivered and grew deadly pale at the thought. "Oh, leprosy of slavery! Oh, curse unspeakable!" exclaimed the silent horror stricken spirit of this noble man. Severgn leaned for a moment to rest himself against one of the pillars of the porch; and yet he feared that his condition would alarm Rosetta.

The tall form of Belshazzar approached. The height of Severgn surpassed it as he leaned against the pillar. Though Severgn's face was ghastly, he attempted to beguile Rosetta by indifference to his calamity.

"Maurice dear!" sighed Rosetta, stroking his chin with her hand. "Maurice! dear" and then she placed her arm about his neck and dragged his face to her own,

but shrank back in terror; for the cheek was cold and Severgn had even struggled from her.

Suddenly a blindness seized Severgn and the world in front of him seemed spinning round in a circle. "Belshazzar!" exclaimed Rosetta. Belshazzar sprang forward and saved his master from the stones in front. Again Severgn recovered and dragged himself by the assistance of Belshazzar into the parlor where he fell prostrate upon a sofa.

Oh, the mental torture of that moment! Severgn inwardly prayed for death. Much better--far, far better was death than to live to report his fatal infamy to Madam, or to induce insanity—worse than death—in Rosetta! As he had entered the hall his eyes caught a glance of the sewing women through the curtained entrance which led to that room and the wedding dress took on the appearance of a shroud. Rosetta had fallen upon her knees by the prostrate side of Severgn weeping and caressing him. Severgn felt the touch of her hand upon his cold brow. He felt her arm soft and white encircle his head as he lay there praying for death. Things were growing darker for him. Outward impressions began slowly to vanish. He was happy in the prospect of dissolution. That current of blood which never before had congested his brain, now spoke aloud within him, as it spun round and round in his head. Feited, muddy, polluted tide of life! Slowly his soul saw the form of the angel of unconsciousness approach and drive that loathsome tide backward slinking to the region of the heart. He felt the sweet pure face of Rosetta burning with

anguish against his temple. A hot rain of tears upon his face—a hissing of blood within his head; then the light footfalls of night, filled with incoherent visions, settled like a dark light-obscuring mist about his brow; and last of all, and most horrible, the image of a human heart! a wild shriek, then all was calm opacity—the blotting out of thought and life itself—Nirvana! the sweet eternity of nothing!

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

AFTER THE SHOCK HAD PASSED.

HAVE you ever stood in the path of the tornado after the wind had subsided? Have you viewed the earth after the hour of ravishment? Have you seen the uprooted oak, the proud elm prone upon its side, the grain pounded flat with the earth—limbs, leaves and dislocated tree-tops scattered promiscuously about?

Have you looked upon the face of sorrow? Have you seen wretchedness? Know you the pallid face of despair? If so, you are capable of forming a faint impression of the home of Severgn a week after the occurence related in the preceding chapter.

The storm could not stop with Severgn. By the very essential condition of things it must light upon the inmates of that home, one by one. Oh, the agony, the suspense in the mind of Severgn during those days! Beat it back as he would, there would come an hour, and within a few days, when the facts *must* be known.

The marriage had been already indefinitely postponed. Partially recovering from the shock Maurice had arisen. Yet that tread of his was more the step of the dead than of the quick. Sunday came, then Monday approached. Yet did the secret of his trouble remain locked in the heart of its victim where it burned on, and on, bitterly, night and day.

Unquenchable fire of approaching despair! Where, where was the element that could quench the burning flame of self consciousness? Where was there known an ablution to cleanse the polluted veins!

The fateful day approached. He had resolved on the night before that the truth must be revealed. Belshazzar was sent to bring the Doctor. He carried a private note. It revealed Severgn's intention and prayed the assistance of the Doctor He came. It was in the afternoon. Into his care the solemn duty was then placed to reveal to Madam and Rosetta the truth, the burden, the fate of Severgn.

Often had Dr. North stood by the bedside of death. Often had it been his solemn duty to reveal to the heart of Mother or sister the solemn announcement of the presence of the awful hour. He had learned well the divine art of consolation in these trying moments; but never had it been his painful duty to smite with the hand of fate the tender heart of love. Never had he crushed the unsuspecting soul of mother with so dark a doom.

Let us make haste. Let us not tarry in the midst of this distracting suspense. Dr. North came and in words most suited, painfully but calmly delivered the message!

The hour, the moment had finally passed. The last sound of that never to be forgotten interview was over. Oh, inquisition of slavery! Oh, maddening, incredulous yet invincible fact! At first there was but doubt, hesitation and fear in the minds of both the listeners. This the Doctor encouraged ; then departed to his own home.

Three days after this he was suddenly summoned to the bedside of Madam. She was prostrate with grief.

The swollen lids of Rosetta's eyes, the pallor of her cheeks denoted the suffering through which she also was passing, the silent pain now rankling within. Nature, however, had come to her relief. Rosetta could weep. Not so for Madam! Her torture of mind spent itself not in tears but crept back into the secrecy of the heart and there gnawed the strings of life.

She called Maurice to her bedside and addressed him—"Maurice, my beloved son"—Madam faltered for she was very weak--"My beloved son, next to whom but one other in this world of grief there is none so sacred to my dying life, I can give to you in holy wedlock my poor daughter, only when the last vestige of doubt shall have been swept away."

"Mother dear, rest in peace," replied he. "No design could be more foreign to my mind. Do not allow distressing thoughts to thus undermine your life. Reflect! Is it not your duty to live for Rosetta's sake? My plans will soon be completed. In my absence she will need your consolation."

Finally a complete plan of investigation was

matured by Maurice ; and when Madam had sufficiently recovered, it was submitted to her. By the middle of winter Severgn, pale and haggard, left upon his sad mission. He took Belshazzar with him. There were a few more tears and again the home of Severgn was locked from the world.

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The painful detail of that protracted sorrow during his long absence shall not be set down. We shall not pry into Rosetta's letters, those wild strains of love and despair. We shall not ask for a report from that sad explorer who had gone forth to search in the teeth of fate the secret of his own frightful doom.

There was a calm, a mournful calm within those silent deserted halls which he had once inhabited. Rosetta and Madam withdrew from the world. Time passed. Spring came. Where was Severgn? inquired the world. There was no reply.

One day a tall gaunt form was seen to pass in at the gate. The news of Severgn's return spread quickly. The slaves one by one hastily and joyfully gathered about him in silent homage.

Maurice had come home for a short time upon request of Madam to settle an affair of the Severgn estate which had for some time been pending in the courts. However, the secrets of his lineage had not yet been unearthed ; and after his business mission had been accomplished Severgn again prepared for his second departure. It was the last days of spring. Flowers were blooming in the yard, and occasionally

a slave was seen digging around the roots of plants or clipping the grass along the gravel walks.

Again and perhaps for the last time Severgn paid a farewell visit to those apartments of the mansion which in the past had been the ministers of so much pleasure to him. After carefully arranging the tools, instruments and various materials of his laboratory, he slowly passed through the museum where lay the specimens of mineral, fossils and relics. These dead and silent images, lifting up their faces returned his farewell gaze in mute and solemn pity. Thence taking himself slowly through his library room, secretly in his heart Severgn felt that he was bidding a final adieu to those many volumes that he knew and loved so well.

After a time he came out on the porch where he met Rosetta. The vines that had begun to climb the trellis lightly swayed in the summer breeze.

"Rosetta," spoke Maurice, breaking the silence. "Well, Maurice dear," lowly answered Rosetta, clinging to his arm, and looking into his pale face. Severgn hesitated. "Never mind, Rosetta; it is of no consequence!" answered he.

Rosetta did not press him for reply. Severgn was thinking of the first time he had set his eyes on Rosetta. It was beneath the boughs of that pine not ten steps distance. She was then a child. A slave of Camillo! He dared not refer to those things. They caused painful reflections. Rosetta abstained from referring to many incidents of the past for the same reason. She could not tell him of that sweet episode upon the

hill and of the prophecy of Bianco; how for nearly four years she had secretly loved him. For although it was painful to hide these things, it was more painful to disclose them!

Severgn was now preparing to depart for the second time upon the bitterest yet the most inexorable duty of his life. Belshazzar was superintending affairs. Things were about completed. They would start the next day. Again there came the struggle of farewell, and all was over. Severgn was gone!

Prior to his departure, however, the slaves had all been legally manumitted. They were given their freedom to depart. But they did not leave. They chose to remain as slaves in the home of Madam Severgn. As for Belshazzar, he preferred to follow the sad footsteps of his dear master whereso e'er sorrow should lead him.

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Days, weeks, months dropped dolefully from the dial of time, during which the daily mein of Rosetta was sad and mournful as that of a widow. In her heart she had been widowed. Vainly did the prying world struggle for the cause. But they could learn nothing.

Again it will be recalled that these were stirring times. Lincoln had become President. The South was in arms! South Carolina had set the example of secession, soon to be followed by sister Southern states. Few, except those who partook in that terrible struggle, can appreciate the public excitement of those times. Sumpter came. The battle of Bull Run swiftly fol-

lowed. And now it was seen that the war was no delusion. The South meant to defy the power of the government. The virus admitted into the constitution at the incipiency of the Republic had poisoned the nation. Chattelism in fellowman was about to avenge itself.

Weeks passed slowly by. Oh, the painful suspense —the bitterness of those days! During this time Maurice had written but once. It was brief. The reverberations of a crushed heart.

Finally he again wrote, but it was a private letter to Dr. North. Rosetta was not aware of the reception of this communication. It was well that she knew nothing of this strange appeal.

It ran as follows:

————————, VA., August 1, 1861.

DEAR DOCTOR:—Oh, yes! How unkindly I have treated you one and all. I admit it. But it has been through most righteous motives. It has been through compassion for you and the others that I have maintained this long silence. Yes, weeks have slipped by. God knows they have been more than weeks. They have been months! I have been silent. Had I spoken I could have but reiterated my last words to you.

All, all is night. Hope has fled me!

Oh foolish, childish wailings! But you will have me speak! You would have me relate my madness. Well I will. But it is through fear that my silence is now working greater pain than would the full course of my lamentations were they daily poured in your

ears. I had hoped to free you of this. I did hope to lock it all from the world—to pursue my course quietly to the end. But your many letters, your prayers and entreaties for immediate answer have shaken me. Very well; I shall take opportunity to relieve my mind of the pain of a final resolve which I have made and which has oppressed me, but which I shall demand followed to the letter. It is this:

You speak of the constancy of Rosetta's love. You dwell upon this. Oh, God!—torture upon torture! I can never hope to look upon her again. Would to God, we had never met! Until time and the immutable law of things have purged from my flesh the curse which fate has cast upon me, I will, I must shun those things whose purer light would but illumine my hideous spots.

I cannot write her more. She must remember the stern decree which nature has set between us. Would she forget the solemn request of her dear mother? I would not have it so. I know she disbelieves like a true and confiding lover—that no fate or argument could teach her my curse. Holiness of woman—to love the fallen! Constancy of woman's love! God bless her!

Doctor, teach Rosetta to forget me. Though in this I ask you to be gentle and guileful. Do not crush nor overwhelm her. Breath into her soul the essence of my inconstancy. Use honorable but insidious methods. Teach her heart gentle means to forget. For now do I solemnly think we never again can meet. I would not have her sorrows prolonged. I know the

bitterness of suspense. Better far by tenderest methods to obliterate the ties which bind us than one hour's unnecessary torture.

The evidence accumulates. I have pursued it into its uttermost ramification. Like a sleuth-hound I have followed it night and day. I sometimes persuade me, that I am temporarily insane—that it is all a delusion —that it is a bewilderment of a fever stricken brain. But I see the confirmation in all things and I know that I am Severgn and that I am cursed.

But enough of this lamentation. It is the fate of Rosetta which now most concerns me. If I am to drag out my days with this leprosy hanging to me I could think of no greater hell than to multiply my sorrow with thoughts of her mourning me. God speed her happiness—I can never minister to that. There is but one way. She must learn my faults, my weaknesses, my repugnant parts, which the blindness of love now conceals from her. Let her eyes be opened. Let her remember me not in love but in pity—not as Maurice Severgn of her heart, but as a poor cursed thing for which she may only offer a prayer.

Doctor, there is a way to train the most obdurate vine slowly and imperceptibly out of the bent of its natural course. Even let it be so with Rosetta's affection. There is a means by which the life of the loftiest tree may be compassed gently Let her love for me thus die.

It is twelve o'clock. There is a deep darkness without. I hear the crash of thunder. It is the artillery of the clouds. I love the furious, for it

drowns the torrent within me. I know that I shall love the groan of guns—I shall delight in the excitement of battle. The war is upon us. Thank God it has come!

But silence. I have said a foolish thing. Forget this madness. It was but yesterday—well, no matter. Doctor, you have been my friend. You loved me. For days I gave assurance of strength, but I am now blighted. I have been as a tenderly pruned shrub; for days promising, but in the blooming time putting forth thorns, and exuding sap of poison. Doctor, remember me but as a blasted leaf! I go. It is my last. For, believe me; there is nought of life now dear to me. Rosetta forever parted from me; the very essence of my being poisoned beyond recovery—Therefore, an everlasting farewell. As you are one of the dearest of my earthly friends, I have charged you with my most sacred trust. It is a bequest; for when it shall have been executed, the heart which uttered it shall be dust.

Forever,

MAURICE SEVERGN.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE SHOCK OF BATTLE AND THE PRINCE OF PEACE.

DOCTOR NORTH kept Severgn's letter several weeks during which he read it thoughtfully many times. "I cannot execute this trust!" meditated he. "There is a spirit of injustice in it that thwarts

the immutable law of destiny." Finally the letter was submitted to his wife. "No, by no means, do this," answered she. "The social prejudice of these times against such unions will vanish. Madam herself will some day relent. Rosetta is strong minded; show her the letter. Although the shock will be violent, it will result well, for already Rosetta's mind is engrossed with the noble duties of the sanitary missions and the soldiers aids. She seems resigned to the universal fate of our country. The war clouds that are rolling along the horizon of the to-morrow have darkened the sunlight from every home. But the war will some day be over, and Rosetta and Severgn may meet again."

This was enough. Doctor North folded the letter and filed it carefully away.

A few more days and the terrors of war were at hand. Then daily the bulletins began to tell their fearful story. Battle followed battle. Brothers, fathers, lovers, friends, relatives—even as the snow before the sun, they were melting away. The engines of destruction were doing their bloody work. The wrath of war was upon the misguided people.

However, out from the wail of general desolation came also the song of mercy. Rosetta was among the first to lift her hand and heart in that holy cause which even in the flame of fury has helped to mark that era with humanity—"the soldier's aid and sanitary mission."

The last murmur upon the first bloody field had scarcely died away, when upon all sides sprang into

life the sanitary mission, an army of mercy whose object was not that of death and pain, but of life and love. They dressed tenderly the lacerated limbs; stopped the flow of blood from the weeping wound and brought drink to famished lips. They were at the bedside of fever, they lessened the torture and brought peace to the couch of death. Never before in the sanguinary disputes of the world was such a vast machine of wholesale mercy, tolerance and fraternal consideration set on foot.

France and England had set an example. In the Crimea they had done similar duty, but it was sectional, partisan. Never before in all the dark battle clouds of earth had the torch of sympathy and charity burned more brightly, steadily, unfalteringly than in this war of brothers. In this one mighty heart-beat of sympathy is discovered the pulse of advancing humanity. The promptness and swiftness with which the national sanitary mission sprang forth as faded upon the ear the last peal of Fort Sumpter, attests the general advance of human pity as a national element—the sweetest as it is the rarest sentiment of the human breast.

O'er friend and foe it extended its sheltering wing. Scarcely had pain given voice; scarcely had wounded men marked the earth with their blood, when mercy stretched forth her hand. It was a universal outburst of sympathy No city, hamlet or village can claim the initiatory. From New York to the boundless West sprang forth as at the response of a single call "soldiers' aids" and "sanitary missions." It was like the uprising of flowers beneath a common sun.

They were upon every bloody field from the beginning to the close. Classic heroism—armed but to save! Brave women and brave men! Water for the famishing lips of death, bandages for the wounded! In the midst of the strife, in the camp, in the hospital. The wilds of Arkansas knew them ; they were in Missouri ; at crimson Chickamauga ; Battle Above the Clouds and the hell at Shiloh. On every bloody field along Potomac's renowned waters stood those emissaries of mercy—many of them doing gratis service where life and death were wrapped in the same sulphurous cloud! Brave men and brave women! In self-sacrifice it was samaritan. In heroism it rivaled all that history in her annals of bloody war has made classic! Unarmed except by that mysterious godliness which surrounds the merciful, they stood where lead and iron were as hail. Thousands perished but thousands rushed forward to fill up the gap. In the camp, upon the field and in the hospital they were the hope of the warrior.

Money had to be raised, provisions, delicacies, necessities, and many were the ways and means of the mission. Early in its career came the sanitary fairs, where all things were bought and sold. Probably among the most famous of these stood the one at Cincinnati. To this came the farmer with his barrels of meat, the merchant with his wares, the artist with his paintings, the banker with his subscription of money, the lecturer with his topics, the humorist with his fun, the orator with his stirring appeals, the mother with her handiwork, the sister

and lover with their tokens and jewels; all cast into one mighty treasury for high commissioned deeds of mercy.

These institutions of mercy sent forth regiments of nurses and splendidly equipped surgeons. They watched over the wounded and sick. They erected hospitals for the fever-stricken and dying. For the maimed and crippled they built comfortable homes. No religious cowel or robe marked them upon the field of battle. They were there in the name of humanity.

In these "soldiers' aids and sanitary missions" the work of women outshone that of men; quite as much so in sagacity as in bravery. Up to the third year of the war they alone had contributed gifts whose aggregate sum exceeded *seven millions of dollars!* Never before was the vast resources of the North measured. When tapped, it was found comparatively limitless in blood, treasure and love. All grasped the opportunity to serve the Nation! Sweet respite to the sorrowing! To the charity loving, how glorious the field! To Rosetta, how holy the cause! Rosetta grasped with eagerness to prove her love, her fidelity even in the hour of that awful abandonment which might last through the painful seconds of her remaining years. It soothed and rested her lacerated heart. Whilst listening to the last words of a dying soldier, the pain of her bereavement departed. A saintliness gradually o'er spread her life. Forever in the presence of the pain of others she forgot her own. Life had again become happy; sorrow left but a faint image upon her beautiful face. Ever by the bedside

of death, she became devout. She communed with heaven.

Yet deep in Rosetta's soul lingered the flame of love, burning dim and low like the holy fires of a temple. Often at night when she was alone she knelt by the tent and prayed. When she looked upon the stars in immutable space, a peace, a serenity stole over her. Often she dreamed of Maurice; but not in sorrow. Thus weeks, months, years sped by in the strife on the bloody field and in the hospital. Rosetta had abandoned all hope of seeing Maurice in this life. Calmly she obeyed the orders of her superiors and moved from camp to camp, from hospital to hospital according to the vicissitudes of war, success or defeat, until the long and bloody struggle grew to a close. Finally her wanderings brought her to the Berg of F——, the last hospital in which she figured.

This little town was situated on the eastern slope of Old Virginia's historic ground. Before the war the Berg of F—— was a pleasant and peaceful village nestling close down among the hills on the Rappahannock River. Foot hills of the mountains arose like redoubts about her.

It was spring, in the year 1864. The forests which grew upon the hills were putting forth their first tender signs of foliage. The valley was well grassed. But few were the cattle, sheep or horses if any which fed upon the beautiful pastures. And few were the remaining signs of human life prior to the advent of the army of mercy, that walked the silent streets of the village. War had been there. Thrice had the

Berg of F—— been the focal point of advancing and retreating hosts. Extermination had been abroad. The country was devastated; the village gutted. At the early stages of the war the commerce of the village had dwindled to nothing, and now her people themselves had fled. Fences lay flattened with the earth. Rank weeds and briers grew in the gardens. Uncovered wells gaped in the uninhabited yards. A village of several thousands had dwindled to a few dozens of wretched people. These crept from out their shell-riven homes sorrowfully into the spring air. The walks gave forth a hollow sound as they moved slowly about. It was wretched! What was once the pride of the village was now a heap of bricks and rotting sills. Charred roofs, blackened fire-scorched walls were the mournful monuments of her past. Grass grew from the pavements. Sheaves of grass and flowers were again bursting from the fertile earth, but at their roots lay fragments of iron shells.

Doleful was the sight of that little company of the army of mercy as they entered that deserted village. It was night, a moonlight night, when they entered. The tread of their feet as they moved down those silent streets resounded ghost-like about them. What the Berg of F—— had become the entire South had very nearly approached—a beleaguered, starving, wretched people.

Sherman had made his march to the sea. He was marching on doomed Richmond. Grant at the head of a mighty host was slowly encompassing that fated spot. The end of the American Rebellion was near at

hand. The army of mercy always following close to that of death, had taken its quarters within hearing of those terrible battles which came so hot and fast just preceding the fall of the Southern Confederacy. They had erected their tents upon the border of the stream, and refitted as best they could the remaining houses for hospitals—standing in readiness for that dreadful tragedy which they knew was most surely at hand. They had established telegraphic communications with headquarters. Their ambulances were in readiness; their sanitary transports upon the stream. At the first sound of cannon a detachment were to rush to the scene of death. It came. The transports were sent. They returned with their groaning freight of wounded and dying.

It was on the morning of the sixth of May, 1864, though the exact date is not vouched. Guards were standing in arms. Orderlies were hastening about. The village was reposing in unsuspecting quiet. A few invalids were being attended at the hospital—a day of sunshine, of spring air and birds. Suddenly from over those heights which enclosed the village was heard a deep dull roll as of distant thunder. There was silence—prolonged and painful silence! Could those accustomed ears mistake that sound? They listened. Another roll, deep and prolonged. Then another, and another! Nurses looked to each other and whispered, "It has begun!" Another deep moan! The sick turned to each other and whispered, "It is Grant! He has broken his winter quarters!" Again the cannon rumbled and this time the reverberations

shook the window panes. Quickly the vision of marching hosts stepped into life before the imagination of those confined to couches. Limbless men turned painfully in their beds and cried, "it is Grant at Chancellorsville!"

Upon the distant heights the pickets signaled to the headquarters in the valley that a battle was being fought a few miles to the west. Like magic the news was carried from ear to ear till it reached the main hospital. Now followed a wild scene. Those wounded soldiers who had known many a battle felt their blood excitingly course through their veins. The long suspence of the winter had broken; Grant had begun his march upon Richmond. It was irresistible. Some sang, some laughed, and some shouted! What they heard were the cannons of Grant in the Wilderness.

We shall not review the horrors of those days. Battle followed upon battle in such fierce succession that although the surgeons and nurses were multiplied many times, the hospital could not accommodate the wounded and dying. Load after load came in during those succeeding scenes until the Berg of F—— was overrun. Finally shelter itself was impossible, and the wounded lay in the grassy yards; some dying, many praying for death and freedom from their undressed wounds. To add to this wretchedness there was neither canvass nor boards to protect their wounded bodies from the alternating spring rains and heating suns, which now soaked the grass and earth beneath them and then turned the waters into steamy vapors.

Not long afterward eight thousand recruits passed through the Berg of F——. Sanguine in the belief of their martial prowess and burning for the long promised battle. Their tread was steady and firm. The hospital attendants came out to meet them. Lines of women dressed in white—it was a thrilling sight. Suddenly at one tremendous chorus, as if their souls were operated by a single key the marching columns awakened the valley with a shout. Then to the tune of the military bands they raised the famous war song of that period, "John Brown's body lies moldering in the grave."

Soon, however, followed the dirge. A battle, and a third of them had been swept away like grass before the scythe. Thus was it in '64!

Among the many tents which dotted the village and sloping hill side, there was one which commands our special attention. It was a large rectangular arrangement erected in what, in some time past, had been a small public park. It was provided with no flooring whatever but the plain earth, the grass of which was in a short time trampled flat and hard, soon disappearing entirely. It was a white cool arrangement staked tightly to the earth and held with guy ropes. Two upright poles supported its immense canvas top. Within this tent on both sides were stretched the cots of the wounded, amounting to some two hundred or more in number. In the center near one of the supporting poles stood a large table upon which was a variety of drinking glasses, several stone vessels, a bucket of fresh water, and some sugar, lemons and

spoons, besides a surgeon's bag of surgical tools and some drugs.

"Madam, I understand that Spotsylvania arrived last night?" inquired a young man who could not have been past twenty-five, though he wore the uniform of an assistant surgeon. The woman whom he saluted was the head nurse of that division of the hospital.

"Yes sir, in the drenching rain," answered she. "Poor fellows. Hasten Doctor; there are many here whose wounds have not been dressed since they were picked up on the field."

"Very well, make haste," answered the surgeon. "Get your assistants to bring bandages and water. Begin stripping and cleansing!"

Many whose wounds had not yet been dressed lay near by. The clotted clothing sticking tightly to the lacerated parts had to be removed with the greatest care; for the pain was excruciating. After all was in readiness one by one the wounds were dressed until all had been cared for.

"Madam, how is the Colonel this morning after the storm?" inquired the surgeon.

"Improving, I think," answered the nurse.

"Where is his couch?"

"It is No. 12."

The surgeon and nurse walked over to the couch designated, the couches being cases of ducking filled with straw.

"He sleeps," whispered the surgeon.

"Does he? Oh that is good!" lowly exclaimed the nurse. "Last night he tossed in pain."

Throughout the tent now could be seen several nurses here and there bending over couches ministering drugs, teas or sweetmeats, assisting the invalids in their couches or dropping a tender word; doing little biddings, writing hasty letters for those whose families and children, or lovers were far away. Pinned to the canvas walls of the tent appeared pictures which had come from old magazines, or play-bills—anything to attract the eye of the patient and turn his attention from his pain.

Presently the soldier in bunk 12 addressed the surgeon—"I have had a full hour's rest, Doctor, thanks."

"What! you are awake, Colonel?"

'Yes sir," answered the wounded soldier.

"How is your shoulder, Colonel?"

"Not much pain this morning," answered he in poorly assumed indifference.

"Colonel," inquired the surgeon, "how came you at Spotsylvania? I thought you were with Sherman!"

The soldier opened his eyes in surprise, for he recognized the surgeon. "Why, this is my old friend of Shiloh!" exclaimed he through a ghastly smile.

"It is, Colonel," answered the surgeon, gently grasping the extended hand of the sick man.

"Strange meeting again of ours!" continued the soldier. "Why, surgeon, I was captured and sent to Andersonville where I was parolled and joined Grant at Chancellorsville."

"The devil you say!" exclaimed the surgeon stooping to examine the wound, but immediately arising,

having noticed a huge spot of blood upon the sheets near the pillow. "Bring bandages in haste for God's sake," excitedly commanded the surgeon in a whisper. "He is bleeding to death!"

The soldier had broken his wound afresh, the bandages having accidentally been displaced. Fresh bandages having been brought, again the wound was dressed and the blood stopped. "Colonel, to-morrow I shall have you removed to the heights where there is better air," remarked the surgeon.

"Never mind, surgeon, I fought and fell with these fellows, I can partake of the same hospital with them."

"It is a debt, Colonel—I owe a debt to you for my life."

"Let it pass!" answered the soldier, turning uneasily on his couch.

"No! by heaven, you will find I command in the hospital and you obey!" answered the surgeon who then handed the head nurse a gold piece and gave her proper instructions for the purchase of necessaries in which it appeared that the soldier was to be removed on the next day to the heights and given a tent by himself. A special nurse was to be detailed for his couch and all necessaries brought when required.

At this juncture there appeared at the tent door a female dressed in the uniform of a nurse of the highest rank, a spotless white. After a few moment's conversation with the surgeon she passed on up the corridor between the two long rows of couches. At one place she stopped near the couch of a sufferer, spoke gently

to him and placed her hand upon his brow, after which she arose and went to the table, where she filled a glass with lemon ice and returned to him. He arose upon his feeble elbow and drank. A few words more with the head nurse of that division and she departed at the other end of the tent.

"Surgeon," asked the soldier—there was a noticible anxiety upon the face of the speaker—"Can you give me the name of the nurse who has just passed through the tent?"

"No," answered the surgeon, "but if you desire I will ascertain it for you."

"Very well, surgeon, I have a small curiosity to know who she is."

After a time an orderly came in and saluted the surgeon. "Have Colonel Randolph taken upon the height to-morrow. Provide him special service complete," directed the surgeon.

"Surgeon," interrupted the soldier again in a husky whisper, "I can see no need for this undue kindness."

"Colonel, I prefer that you would lay quiet. I shall make such disposition of you as I deem most beneficial for you."

The wounded soldier who was awarded such kindly attention was a young Colonel whom the surgeon had met at Shiloh under peculiar circumstances.

At the closing hours of that fearful contest the Confederates had driven the Nationals slowly back. Although the latter disputed every inch of the ground desperately, being overwhelmed by superior numbers

they were steadily giving way. They had been so pressed that finally they stood upon the verge of the Tennessee River. Before the Confederates could accomplish their object, however, and drive their enemy into the flood they were compelled to cross a small stream or rather a gulch in which there now lay mud and water. It was upon the slippery banks of this depression that the fiercest struggle of the entire field took place. It was a horrible encounter of the most desperate character. A few cannon and mortars which during the day had been parked by the Nationals on the opposite shore were suddenly brought into use with telling effect. Soon the gulch was filled with fighting men, wounded horses, guns and sabers. A few Confederate cannons which were being hauled through had stuck in the mud and could not be pulled up the steep banks. The noise was indescribable. Screams, curses and the shrieks and groans of dying men arose from the cloudy pit in diabolical cadence. The battle cloud arose from the gulch like smoke from a burning crater. From the opposite banks looking down it was an imposingly horrible encounter. The colors flaunted mysteriously ominous in that "pit of hell." Suddenly to add to the already diabolical affray the Federal gun boats opened fire from the river. They were enfilading the entire gulch! The scene now outdoes description. Foeman and comrade were alike swept away by bursting shells and flying cannon balls. The smoke had obscured them until they were unknown to each other. They could not distinguish foeman from comrade. There was an

instant retreat by both sides and the embankments ran red with their blood.

It was out from this horrible scene that the young Colonel, then a captain, carried upon his shoulders the bleeding body of the Surgeon; and it was for this that the Surgeon was now repaying him. The morrow dawned. The tent had been erected upon the hill with its door presented to the village below and a soft downy cot arranged for its inmate. At the hour of ten an ambulance called and the soldier was transported slowly away from that scene of suffering and dying comrades. After a time the ascent was made and the soldier layed upon the soft couch. His uniform, his sword, and his pistol were gracefully hung near by in one corner. It was a beautiful locality. In convalescing hours, if providence so willed, he could amuse himself and drive away monotony by the varied scenes in front. Far away could be traced the Rappahannock winding slowly between the opposing heights like a silvery ribbon. On either side the jutting hills, which in places were clothed with forests, stood forth like bastions and military redoubts. In the mornings the sun arose in splendor from behind the far away broken horizon. Far down there in the valley lay the village with its broken walls and twinkling tents. However, the Colonel was not the only wounded soldier upon the heights. Many others through the tender mercy of friends and relatives or through other sources had been removed to this favored locality.

"Doctor," inquired the nurse whom we have pre-

viously met, "how fares your patient upon the height?"

"Not so well. Delirious last night. I expected a change by this time. But there is much to fear—perhaps blood poisoning."

"Where is the wound located?"

"In the right shoulder."

"The ball has been extracted has it not?"

"Yes, this was done on the field," answered the Surgeon. "I have been unable to secure a proper nurse. Could you use your power to send me an experienced attendant? He spent last night alone. This must not occur again. He is very low. Delirious at times!"

"I shall endeavor to send somebody by midnight. But you know how we are all occupied, night and day!" This colloquy took place three days after the removal. The soldier during that time had not recuperated any. He was sinking daily, not so much from the wound directly, but from some inner trouble which his friend in vain had tried to fathom.

On the fourth evening the young Surgeon came at sunset to stay with his friend till relieved by a regular nurse who was to arrive in the night. Night came down followed by a soft twilight suffusing over hill and valley. Slowly the outline of distant objects melted into indistinct shadow and finally were lost to sight. Below in the village, lights twinkled at windows and by times lanterns glinted in the streets. Above was a wilderness of stars. It was a soft summer night. A cool sea breeze stole gently o'er the hill soothing many a weary couch of fever.

'Colonel," inquired the Surgeon who had taken his seat on a camp-stool at the tent door but near the pillow of the couch, "is there not some little thing I might do for you? I have written no letters as yet. Are there no words you would like sent home?"

"Surgeon," answered the invalid in a husky whisper, "I have no communications to make."

"No communications! But you certainly have friends, anxious for your safety? Your condition was reported to-day at headquarters, but the record is strangely silent concerning your home. The Sanitary wish to make their report. Have you any details to give?"

"None!" answered the invalid, after which the short colloquy seemed to have come to a close.

After a time the soldier broke the silence. "Surgeon, I was in hopes to die in the ranks; what are my chances for life?"

"They are good!" answered the Surgeon, hiding the truth.

The patient attempted to raise himself upon his pillow but fell back lifelessly with a smothered sigh. After a time he inquired, "Will I be able to fall into line within thirty days or less?"

"I am thinking there will be no need of you in thirty days."

"What! good news from the front?" exclaimed the soldier again attempting to ralley.

"The Confederacy will fall in less than half that time."

"Thank God! But I did hope to die upon the field

if die I must. It is horrible to rot in the hospital!"

"This is a beautiful night!" exclaimed the Surgeon attempting to turn the mind of his invalid from the subject of war and death. "Look through the tent door. Are those not magnificent stars?"

"Lovely!" was the exclamation of the low husky notes. But in a moment the wounded man turned his face slowly away and after a time fell asleep. The Surgeon sat quietly waiting the coming of the promised assistant. He looked at his watch. The hands stood at nine. After a time he walked forth into the soft moonlight and slowly paced back and forth near the door. He had extinguished the candle and all within the tent was now dark.

After a time the Surgeon observed the approach of some one carrying a lantern. He waited. It was the expected nurse.

"You have come!" remarked the Surgeon.

"Yes, Surgeon. How is your patient resting?"

"He has just fallen asleep."

The nurse darkened the lantern with her apron and stole calmly into the tent, the Surgeon following. "Here are the medicines," remarked the Surgeon softly. "There is water and you will find towels and many other necessaries packed within that box in the corner. Allow me to say that I am pleased that *you* have been sent Madam. Report of your kindly deeds and your merits as a nurse has reached me. Good nurses are rare. One must understand the affections, the sentiments! They must have the skill to pry into the mind. Half the sufferer's ills lie there. But few have the skill to fathom them."

"Thank you Surgeon, sincerely!" answered the nurse in a whisper. "Your friend's prosperity shall be my only care. I shall do all within my power." Then gently leaning over the couch of the sleeping soldier, she let fall the dim rays of the lantern upon the pillow—but started, and her eyes distended as she scrutinized the stubbled face. The Surgeon heard her breathing quick and fast. Her face had become pale.

"Do you recognize him?" inquired the Surgeon. The nurse arose and looked into the Surgeon's face. There was an expression of painful wonder within her eyes. Again she leaned above the couch. The sleeper having been disturbed opened his eyes and looked into the face of the nurse. She screamed and started back as she recognized that face—"God spare him, it is Maurice! It is Maurice!" cried she, falling upon her knees and clasping the pale brow—"Live! Maurice, I am Rosetta!"

CHAPTER XL.

A LAST WORD.

"AND this is all?" inquired Rose Cimarron whose eagerness for every detail was unabated to the last. I was now secretly expecting sudden revelations from her; for I had discovered that the history of the Cimarron family was in some way blended with the Mystery of Louise Pollard. "This is all," answered I. "There is much small detail that might be told, which, however, I will delay at present; for the chief dramatic incidents in the narrative have now been related. I cannot explain the magic by which Rosetta nursed back to life and hope the dying soldier. I do not know what consolations were offered to Madam Severgn that reconciled her to the union of Rosetta and Maurice. But when Severgn had sufficiently recovered he again appeared at the home of Madam Severgn and in the fall of the year Rosetta and he were married. Their lives were certainly filled with happiness; for Severgn now picked up the thread of life where he had dropped it and again felt himself floating gently out into the limitless ocean of intellectual exploration; while Rosetta in that sweet oblivion of co-operation which seems the ever wifely fate of woman, took up the song of life in harmony with her beloved husband. The very silence that now settles about these two people—I must painfully admit—renews the anxieties of the mind to know the

truth. But I fear that the childhood of Severgn's mother, her origin and lineage shall ever remain a sealed book, sacred to the hearts of Rosetta and Maurice."

"And this is the end!" exclaimed Rose Cimarron. But in her smile I read the expression of triumph. "Hark," began she. "It is now my time to entertain. The narrative you have related shall become but a prologue to another which is equally wrought in romance, dramatic coloring and plot. No audience that the Mystery of Louise Pollard may ever gain will experience half the interest that I have felt in its recital; for although partially incomplete in its revelation, I now see clearly that it explains the strange importations of a document that has long been a family possession of the Cimarrons."

My mute curiosity was rightly interpreted; and Rose continued—"Within this document a mythical character is referred to but the full name is not revealed. For some reason only known to the author, the character after brief space is carefully dropped from the records. But that *she*, who is so silently dismissed from the genealogy therein recorded, is none other than the mother of Maurice Severgn, I am now certain. Though the records in this document extend back over the generations of several hundreds of years the part which is of special interest to us begins about the year 1675. The chronicler recites a brief account of the Indian wars, that at that period infested the people of Old Virginia which occurred during the time of the rebellion of Nathanial Bacon against the

tyranny of Berkely, the royalist governor. Many of the Indians who were at this time taken captive were parceled out in the colony as slaves. Among them there was a certain Indian Chieftain who according to the chronicler is dignified with the title of an Indian Prince. He with his wife and infant daughter became captives. It is wisely set down that the yoke of slavery never fit well upon the neck of the liberty-loving and restless American Indian. Likewise the young Chieftain and wife having been transported with others as slaves to the Bermudas soon expired under the lash of bondage. However, their infant daughter survived them; and although she served during her remaining years as a domestic slave in an Old Virginia family her life as such was certainly made even more happy than it could have been had she filled the irksome duties as wife of some savage warrior of the Seneca Nation to which tribe she belonged."

Step by step, Rose Cimarron then traced forth the barbaric strain of this enslaved princess, mingling as it had in the course of years with Teuton blood, finally to culminate in a noble heir, a beautiful and talented girl, the mythical character of the genealogical document. At a very early age this girl it would appear had been placed under the care of guardians who reared her to the age of womanhood in a life of luxury and refinement. Unconscious of the invisible bonds which manacled her hands to an awful fate she had been wooed and won. Jealousy and envy had fought a hand to hand battle for the

possession of this beautiful and accomplished girl. Likewise revenge in the form of a disappointed lover, whose life has been traced, stealthily pursued the unfortunate pair. The early orphanage of the girl and the manner in which she had been reared was enough to arouse the suspicions of the jealous and thirsting heart in which revenge now sat enthroned. The results of his inquiry soon encouraged his malicious spirit. Soon the title-deeds to the soul of this beautiful but fated creature were secured! Then clutching tightly in his hand these awful papers and armed with the authority of a hell-wrought statute, like a fiend he arose before the eyes of the apalled husband. The results are known.

Many facts set down in the strange document referred to by Rose Cimarron were then quoted in corroboration of her theory until the truth became plain and unquestioned. Nor should the descendants and heirs of this Seneca maiden blush for their ancestral blood; since the pages of American History are sanctified by the lasting deeds of noble men who drew their strain from similar fountains.

As to the fate of each of the others who have appeared in the drama of Louise Pollard, it is soon related. Black Salley served her remaining years doing menial labor in the carnal palace where destiny had first lodged her. Father Jerome as we are aware survived his prison experience several years and lived to see happiness come to the lot of his grand-child. Camillo was finally located in Florence. But there being much expense and labor in procuring papers of

extradition, the old *padrone* was allowed to float down the river of life unmolested. Cavilazo was traced to a coast town in Brazil where he met his death at the hands of an enraged Spanish gambler. Bianco became a thrifty merchant and a happy father. Severgn's valet, Belshazzar, was killed in the first day's fight at Shiloh. The fate of Vulcan is uncertain. Careful investigation by Severgn discovered the brief fact that Vulcan upon the very first opportunity broke his bonds and joined the Federal Army, becoming the leader of a company of colored volunteers, who after the Emancipation had embraced their first opportunity to fight for the freedom of their race. There was but one legend remaining to guide Severgn to the possible destiny of Vulcan. In the assaults at Vicksburg he won a title as "The Brave Black Captain." Nothing more is known of him. But had Severgn taken part in that terrific but unsuccessful assault which on the 19th of May, 1863, Gen. Grant sent against Vicksburg, he might have seen the giant form of a negro stretched in death with arms outspread across the Confederate redoubts. A closer examination of the upturned face which now cast its stony eyes upon the silent sky would have revealed a seared and partially disfigure letter "V" which, in years before by some barbarous master, had been branded with a hot iron in the center of the black forehead.

As for Doctor North and his wife, we leave them in happy companionship with Madam and her children.

* * * * *

The last word in the narrative of Louise Pollard

had been spoken. Instantly sped across my mind a reflection which gave me pain. In less than a fortnight I would say farewell. The hour came.

Fitly equipped with the duties of my commission in behalf of Western mining interests, the disturbed condition of which was now unsettling the peace of the Eastern stockholders, early in the summer having now sufficiently recovered from my illness, I repaired to the silver-regions of Nevada. But to the trust of future pages will it be left to relate the sequel of a long and lucrative experience in this land of swift fortune. To the trust of future pages will also be left that no less than romantic life of mine during one long blissful summer among the geysers and canyons of Yellowstone Park where the music of Rose Cimarron's voice peopled the sleeping shades of that wilderness of natural wonders.

THE END.

656

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